Granny's Wonderful Chair

FRANCES BROWNE

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GRANNY'S WONDERFUL CHAIR

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Granny's Wonderful Chair

BY

FRANCES BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY

EMMA L. BROCK

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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Twenty-fifth Printing, 1964

Printed in the United States of America

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GRANNY'S WONDERFUL CHAIR

Granny's Wonderful Chair

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IN an old time, long ago, when the fairies were in the world, there lived a little girl so uncommonly fair and pleasant of look, that they called her Snowflower. This girl was good as well as pretty. No one had ever seen her frown or heard her say a cross word, and young and old were glad when they saw her coming.

Snowflower had no relation in the world but a very

old grandmother, called Dame Frostyface; people di not like her quite so well as her granddaughter, for sh was cross enough at times, but always kind to Snow flower; and they lived together in a little cottage buil of peat, and thatched with reeds, on the edge of a grea forest; tall trees sheltered its back from the nort wind; the mid-day sun made its front warm and cheer ful; swallows built in the eaves; daisies grew thick a the door; but there were none in all that country poore than Snowflower and her grandmother. A cat and tw hens were all their live-stock: their bed was dry grass and the only good piece of furniture in the cottage wa a great arm-chair with wheels on its feet, a black velve cushion, and many curious carvings of flowers an fawns on its dark oaken back.

On that chair Dame Frostyface sat spinning fron morning till night to maintain herself and her grand daughter, while Snowflower gathered sticks for firing looked after the hens and the cat, and did whatever els her grandmother bade her. There was nobody in th shire could spin such fine yarn as Dame Frostyface, bu she spun very slowly. Her wheel was as old as herself and far the more worn; indeed, the wonder was that i did not fall to pieces. So the dame's earnings wer

small, and their living meagre. Snowflower, however, felt no want of good dinners or fine clothes. Every evening, when the fire was heaped with the sticks she had gathered till it blazed and crackled up the cottage chimney, Dame Frostyface set aside her wheel, and told her a new story. Often did the little girl wonder where her grandmother had gathered so many stories, but she soon learned that. One sunny morning, at the time of the swallows coming, the dame rose up, put on the grey hood and mantle in which she carried her yarn to the fairs, and said: "My child, I am going a long journey to visit an aunt of mine, who lives far in the north country. I cannot take you with me, because my aunt is the crossest woman alive, and never liked young people: but the hens will lay eggs for you; there is barley-meal in the barrel; and, as you have been a good girl, I'll tell you what to do when you feel lonely. Lay your head gently down on the cushion of the arm-chair, and say: 'Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story.' It was made by a cunning fairy, who lived in the forest when I was young, and she gave it to me because she knew nobody could keep what they got hold of better. Remember, you must never ask a story more than once in the day; and if there be any occasion to travel, you have

only to seat yourself in it, and say: 'Chair of my grand mother, take me such a way.' It will carry you when ever you wish; but mind to oil the wheels before yo set out, for I have sat on it these forty years in tha same corner."

Having said this, Dame Frostyface set forth to se her aunt in the north country. Snowflower gathere firing and looked after the hens and cat as usual. Sh baked herself a cake or two of the barley-meal; bu when the evening fell the cottage looked lonely. The Snowflower remembered her grandmother's words, and laying her head gently down, she said: "Chair of m grandmother, tell me a story."

Scarce were the words spoken, when a clear voice from under the velvet cushion began to tell a new and mos wonderful tale, which surprised Snowflower so much that she forgot to be frightened. After that the good girl was lonely no more. Every morning she baked barley cake, and every evening the chair told her a new story; but she could never find out who owned th voice, though Snowflower showed her gratitude by pol ishing up the oaken back, and dusting the velvet cush ion, till the chair looked as good as new. The swallow came and built in the eaves, the daisies grew thicke

THE HENS FLEW AWAY ONE MORNING.

han ever at the door; but great misfortunes fell upon Snowflower. Notwithstanding all her care, she forgot o clip the hens' wings, and they flew away one morning to visit their friends, the pheasants, who lived far in he forest; the cat followed them to see its relations; he barley-meal was eaten up, except a couple of handfuls; and Snowflower had often strained her eyes in hopes of seeing the grey mantle, but there was no ppearance of Dame Frostyface.

"My grandmother stays long," said Snowflower to herself; "and by and by there will be nothing to eat. If I could get to her, perhaps she would advise me what to do; and this is a good occasion for travelling."

Next day, at sunrise, Snowflower oiled the chair's wheels, baked a cake out of the last of the meal, took it in her lap by way of provision for the journey, seated herself, and said: "Chair of my grandmother, take me he way she went."

Presently the chair gave a creak, and began to move ut of the cottage, and into the forest the very way Dame Frostyface had taken, where it rolled along at he rate of a coach and six. Snowflower was amazed at his style of travelling, but the chair never stopped nor tayed the whole summer day, till as the sun was set-

ting they came upon an open space, where a hundred men were hewing down the tall trees with their axes, a hundred more were cleaving them for firewood, and twenty waggoners, with horses and waggons, were carrying the wood away. "Oh! chair of my grandmother stop!" said Snowflower, for she was tired, and also wished to know what this might mean. The chair immediately stood still, and Snowflower, seeing an old woodcutter, who looked civil, stepped up to him, and said: "Good father, tell me why you cut all this wood?"

"What ignorant country girl are you?" replied the man, "not to have heard of the great feast which our sovereign, King Winwealth, means to give on the birthday of his only daughter, the Princess Greedalind. It will last seven days. Everybody will be feasted, and this wood is to roast the oxen and the sheep, the geese and the turkeys, amongst whom there is a great lamentation throughout the land."

When Snowflower heard that she could not help wishing to see, and perhaps share in, such a noble feast after living so long on barley cakes; so, seating herself she said: "Chair of my grandmother, take me quickly to the palace of King Winwealth."

The words were hardly spoken, when off the chair

tarted through the trees and out of the forest, to the reat amazement of the woodcutters, who, never hav- ng seen such a sight before, threw down their axes, eft their waggons, and followed Snowflower to the ates of a great and splendid city, fortified with strong valls and high towers, and standing in the midst of wide plain covered with cornfields, orchards, and illages.

It was the richest city in all the land; merchants rom every quarter came there to buy and sell, and here was a saying that people had only to live seven ears in it to make their fortunes. Rich as they were, owever, Snowflower thought she had never seen so any discontented, covetous faces as looked out from he great shops, grand houses, and fine coaches, when er chair rattled along the streets; indeed, the citizens id not stand high in repute for either good nature or onesty; but it had not been so when King Winwealth as young, and he and his brother, Prince Wisewit, overned the land together—Wisewit was a wonderful rince for knowledge and prudence. He knew the hole art of government, the tempers of men, and the owers of the stars; moreover, he was a great magician, nd it was said of him that he could never die or grow

old. In his time there was neither discontent nor sick
ness in the city—strangers were hospitably entertaine
without price or questions. Lawsuits there were none
and no one locked his door at night. The fairies use
to come there at May-day and Michaelmas, for the
were Prince Wisewit's friends—all but one, called For
tunetta, a shortsighted but very cunning fairy, wh
hated everybody wiser than herself, and the princ
especially, because she could never deceive him.

There was peace and pleasure for many a year i
King Winwealth's city, till one day at midsumme
Prince Wisewit went alone to the forest, in search of
strange herb for his garden, but he never came back
and though the king, with all his guards, seached fa
and near, no news was ever heard of him. When hi
brother was gone, King Winwealth grew lonely in hi
great palace, so he married a certain princess, calle
Wantall, and brought her home to be his queen. Thi
princess was neither handsome nor agreeable. Peopl
thought she must have gained the king's love by en
chantment, for her whole dowry was a desert island
with a huge pit in it that never could be filled, and he
disposition was so covetous, that the more she got th
greedier she grew. In process of time the king an

ueen had an only daughter, who was to be the heiress f all their dominions. Her name was the Princess reedalind, and the whole city were making prepara- ions to celebrate her birthday—not that they cared nuch for the princess, who was remarkably like her nother both in looks and temper, but being King Win- vealth's only daughter, people came from far and ear to the festival, and among them strangers and airies who had not been there since the day of Prince Wisewit.

There was a surprising bustle about the palace, a nost noble building, so spacious that it had a room for very day in the year. All the floors were of ebony, and ll the ceilings of silver, and there was such a supply of golden dishes used by the household, that five hundred rmed men kept guard night and day lest any of them hould be stolen. When these guards saw Snowflower nd her chair, they ran one after the other to tell the ing, for the like had never been seen nor heard of in is dominions, and the whole court crowded out to see he little maiden and her chair that came of itself.

When Snowflower saw the lords and ladies in their mbroidered robes and splendid jewels, she began to eel ashamed of her own bare feet and linen gown; but

at length taking courage, she answered all their ques
tions, and told them everything about her wonderfu
chair. The queen and the princess cared for nothin
that was not gilt. The courtiers had learned the sam
fashion, and all turned away in high disdain except th
old king, who, thinking the chair might amuse hi
sometimes when he got out of spirits, allowed Snow
flower to stay and feast with the scullion in his wors
kitchen. The poor little girl was glad of any quarter
though nobody made her welcome—even the servan
despised her bare feet and linen gown. They woul
give her chair no room but in a dusty corner behind th
back door, where Snowflower was told she might slee
at night and eat up the scraps the cook threw away.

That very day the feast began; it was fine to see th
multitudes of coaches and people on foot and on horse
back who crowded to the palace, and filled every roon
according to their rank. Never had Snowflower see
such roasting and boiling. There was wine for th
lords and spiced ale for the common people, music an
dancing of all kinds, and the best of gay dresses; bu
with all the good cheer there seemed little merrimen
and a deal of ill-humour in the palace.

Some of the guests thought they should have bee

easted in grander rooms; others were vexed to see
any finer than themselves. All the servants were dis-
atisfied because they did not get presents. There was
omebody caught every hour stealing the cups, and a
ultitude of people were always at the gates clamour-
ng for goods and lands, which Queen Wantall had
aken from them. The guards continually drove them
way, but they came back again, and could be heard
lainly in the highest banquet hall; so it was not won-
erful that the old king's spirits got uncommonly low
hat evening after supper. His favourite page, who
lways stood behind him, perceiving this, reminded his
ajesty of the little girl and her chair.

"It is a good thought," said King Winwealth. "I
ave not heard a story this many a year. Bring the
hild and the chair instantly!"

The favourite page sent a messenger to the first
itchen, who told the master-cook, the master-cook
old the kitchen-maid, the kitchen-maid told the chief-
cullion, the chief-scullion told the dust-boy, and he
old Snowflower to wash her face, rub up her chair, and
o to the highest banquet hall, for the great king Win-
vealth wished to hear a story.

Nobody offered to help her, but when Snowflower

had made herself as smart as she could with soap an water, and rubbed the chair till it looked as if dust ha never fallen on it, she seated herself, and said: "Cha of my grandmother, take me to the highest banque hall."

Instantly the chair marched in a grave and courtl fashion out of the kitchen, up the grand staircase, an into the highest hall. The chief lords and ladies of th land were entertained there, besides many fairies an notable people from distant countries. There ha never been such company in the palace since the tim of Prince Wisewit; nobody wore less than embroidere satin. King Winwealth sat on his ivory throne in robe of purple velvet, stiff with flowers of gold; th queen sat by his side in a robe of silver cloth, claspe with pearls; but the Princess Greedalind was finer sti the feast being in her honour. She wore a robe of clot of gold clasped with diamonds; two waiting-ladies white satin stood, one on either side, to hold her fa and handkerchief; and two pages, in gold-lace liver stood behind her chair. With all that Princess Greed lind looked ugly and spiteful; she and her mother we angry to see a barefooted girl and an old chair allowe to enter the banquet hall.

The supper-table was still covered with golden dishes, and the best of good things, but no one offered Snowflower a morsel: so, having made an humble courtesy to the king, the queen, the princess, and the good company, most of whom scarcely noticed her, the poor little girl sat down upon the carpet, laid her head on the velvet cushion, as she used to do in the old cottage, and said—"Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story."

Everybody was astonished, even to the angry queen and the spiteful princess, when a clear voice from under the cushion said—

"Listen to the story of the Christmas Cuckoo!"

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTMAS CUCKOO

"ONCE upon a time there stood in the midst a bleak moor, in the north country, a certa village; all its inhabitants were poor, f their fields were barren, and they had little trade, b the poorest of them all were two brothers called Scr and Spare, who followed the cobbler's craft, and h but one stall between them. It was a hut built of cl and wattles. The door was low and always open, f there was no window. The roof did not entirely ke out the rain, and the only thing comfortable about

as a wide hearth, for which the brothers could never nd wood enough to make a sufficient fire. There they orked in most brotherly friendship, though with little ncouragement.

"The people of that village were not extravagant in hoes, and better cobblers than Scrub and Spare might e found. Spiteful people said there were no shoes so ad that they would not be worse for their mending. evertheless Scrub and Spare managed to live between heir own trade, a small barley field, and a cottage gar- en, till one unlucky day when a new cobbler arrived in he village. He had lived in the capital city of the ingdom, and, by his own account, cobbled for the ueen and princesses. His awls were sharp, his lasts ere new; he set up his stall in a neat cottage with two indows. The villagers soon found out that one patch f his would outwear two of the brothers'. In short, all he mending left Scrub and Spare, and went to the new obbler. The season had been wet and cold, their bar- ey did not ripen well, and the cabbages never half losed in the garden. So the brothers were poor that inter, and when Christmas came they had nothing to east on but a barley loaf, a piece of rusty bacon, and me small beer of their own brewing. Worse than

that, the snow was very deep, and they could get n
firewood. Their hut stood at the end of the village, b
yond it spread the bleak moor, now all white and silen
but that moor had once been a forest, great roots of ol
trees were still to be found in it, loosened from the so
and laid bare by the winds and rains—one of these,
rough, gnarled log, lay hard by their door, the half of
above the snow, and Spare said to his brother—

" 'Shall we sit here cold on Christmas while the gre
root lies yonder? Let us chop it up for firewood, th
work will make us warm.'

" 'No,' said Scrub; 'it's not right to chop wood o
Christmas; besides, that root is too hard to be broke
with any hatchet.'

" 'Hard or not we must have a fire,' replied Spar
'Come, brother, help me in with it. Poor as we ar
there is nobody in the village will have such a yule lo
as ours.'

"Scrub liked a little grandeur, and in hopes of havi
a fine yule log, both brothers strained and strove wi
all their might till, between pulling and pushing, th
great old root was safe on the hearth, and beginning
crackle and blaze with the red embers. In high gle
the cobblers sat down to their beer and bacon. Th

oor was shut, for there was nothing but cold moon-ght and snow outside; but the hut, strewn with fir oughs, and ornamented with holly, looked cheerful as e ruddy blaze flared up and rejoiced their hearts.

" 'Long life and good fortune to ourselves, brother!' id Spare. 'I hope you will drink that toast, and may e never have a worse fire on Christmas—but what is at?'

"Spare set down the drinking-horn, and the brothers stened astonished, for out of the blazing root they eard, 'Cuckoo! cuckoo!' as plain as ever the spring-rd's voice came over the moor on a May morning.

" 'It is something bad,' said Scrub, terribly fright-ned.

" 'May be not,' said Spare; and out of the deep hole the side which the fire had not reached flew a large ey cuckoo, and lit on the table before them. Much the cobblers had been surprised, they were still more when it said—

" 'Good gentlemen, what season is this?'

" 'It's Christmas,' said Spare.

" 'Then a merry Christmas to you!' said the cuckoo. went to sleep in the hollow of that old root one eve-ing last summer, and never woke till the heat of your

fire made me think it was summer again; but now sinc
you have burned my lodging, let me stay in your hu
till the spring comes round—I only want a hole to slee
in, and when I go on my travels next summer I
assured I will bring you some present for your trouble

" 'Stay, and welcome,' said Spare, while Scrub s
wondering if it were something bad or not; 'I'll mak
you a good warm hole in the thatch. But you must b
hungry after that long sleep?—here is a slice of barle
bread. Come help us to keep Christmas!'

"The cuckoo ate up the slice, drank water from th
brown jug, for he would take no beer, and flew into
snug hole which Spare scooped for him in the thatch
the hut.

"Scrub said he was afraid it wouldn't be lucky; b
as it slept on, and the days passed he forgot his fea
So the snow melted, the heavy rains came, the co
grew less, the days lengthened, and one sunny morni
the brothers were awoke by the cuckoo shouting its ov
cry to let them know the spring had come.

" 'Now I'm going on my travels,' said the bird, 'ov
the world to tell men of the spring. There is no cou
try where trees bud or flowers bloom, that I will n
cry in before the year goes round. Give me anoth

ice of barley bread to keep me on my journey, and tell
e what present I shall bring you at the twelve-
onth's end.'

"Scrub would have been angry with his brother for
tting so large a slice, their store of barley-meal being
w; but his mind was occupied with what present
ould be most prudent to ask: at length a lucky
ought struck him.

" 'Good master cuckoo,' said he, 'if a great traveller
ho sees all the world like you, could know of any place
here diamonds or pearls were to be found, one of a
lerable size brought in your beak would help such
oor men as my brother and me to provide something
tter than barley bread for your next entertainment.'

" 'I know nothing of diamonds or pearls,' said the
ckoo; 'they are in the hearts of rocks and the sands
rivers. My knowledge is only of that which grows
the earth. But there are two trees hard by the well
at lies at the world's end—one of them is called the
lden tree, for its leaves are all of beaten gold; every
inter they fall into the well with a sound like scat-
red coin, and I know not what becomes of them. As
r the other, it is always green like a laurel. Some call
the wise, and some the merry tree. Its leaves never

fall, but they that get one of them keep a blithe hea in spite of all misfortunes, and can make themselves merry in a hut as in a palace.'

" 'Good master cuckoo, bring me a leaf off that tree cried Spare.

" 'Now, brother, don't be a fool!' said Scrub. 'Thi of the leaves of beaten gold! Dear master cucko bring me one of them!'

"Before another word could be spoken, the cuck had flown out of the open door, and was shouting i spring cry over moor and meadow. The brothers we poorer than ever that year; nobody would send them single shoe to mend. The new cobbler said, in scor they should come to be his apprentices; and Scrub a Spare would have left the village but for their barl field, their cabbage garden, and a certain maid call Fairfeather, whom both the cobblers had courted f seven years without knowing which she meant favour.

"Sometimes Fairfeather seemed inclined to Scru sometimes she smiled on Spare; but the brothers nev disputed for that. They sowed their barley, plant their cabbage, and now that their trade was go worked in the rich villagers' fields to eke out a scan

ring. So the seasons came and passed: spring, summer, harvest, and winter followed each other as they ve done from the beginning. At the end of the lat-r, Scrub and Spare had grown so poor and ragged that irfeather thought them beneath her notice. Old ighbours forgot to invite them to wedding feasts or errymaking; and they thought the cuckoo had for-tten them too, when at daybreak, on the first of pril, they heard a hard beak knocking at their door, d a voice crying—

" 'Cuckoo! cuckoo! Let me in with my presents.'

"Spare ran to open the door, and in came the cuckoo, rrying on one side of its bill a golden leaf larger than at of any tree in the north country; and in the other, e like that of the common laurel, only it had a fresher een.

" 'Here,' it said, giving the gold to Scrub and the een to Spare, 'it is a long carriage from the world's d. Give me a slice of barley bread, for I must tell the rth country that the spring has come.'

"Scrub did not grudge the thickness of that slice, ough it was cut from their last loaf. So much gold d never been in the cobbler's hands before, and he uld not help exulting over his brother.

" 'See the wisdom of my choice!' he said, holding
the large leaf of gold. 'As for yours, as good might
plucked from any hedge. I wonder a sensible bi
would carry the like so far.'

" 'Good master cobbler,' cried the cuckoo, finishi
the slice, 'your conclusions are more hasty than cou
teous. If your brother be disappointed this time, I
on the same journey every year, and for your ho
pitable entertainment will think it no trouble to bri
each of you whichever leaf you desire.'

" 'Darling cuckoo!' cried Scrub, 'bring me a gold
one;' and Spare, looking up from the green leaf
which he gazed as though it were a crown-jewel, said

" 'Be sure to bring me one from the merry tree,' a
away flew the cuckoo.

" 'This is the Feast of All Fools, and it ought to
your birthday,' said Scrub. 'Did ever man fling aw
such an opportunity of getting rich! Much good yo
merry leaves will do in the midst of rags and povert
So he went on, but Spare laughed at him, and answe
with quaint old proverbs concerning the cares th
come with gold, till Scrub, at length getting ang
vowed his brother was not fit to live with a respecta

n; and taking his lasts, his awls, and his golden leaf, left the wattle hut, and went to tell the villagers.

"They were astonished at the folly of Spare and armed with Scrub's good sense, particularly when he owed them the golden leaf, and told that the cuckoo uld bring him one every spring. The new cobbler mediately took him into partnership; the greatest ople sent him their shoes to mend; Fairfeather iled graciously upon him, and in the course of that mmer they were married, with a grand wedding st, at which the whole village danced, except Spare, o was not invited, because the bride could not bear s low-mindedness, and his brother thought him a disace to the family.

"Indeed, all who heard the story concluded that are must be mad, and nobody would associate with n but a lame tinker, a beggar-boy, and a poor woman puted to be a witch because she was old and ugly. for Scrub, he established himself with Fairfeather in ottage close by that of the new cobbler, and quite as e. There he mended shoes to everybody's satisfacn, had a scarlet coat for holidays, and a fat goose dinner every wedding-day. Fairfeather, too, had a mson gown and fine blue ribands; but neither she

nor Scrub were content, for to buy this grandeur t
golden leaf had to be broken and parted with piece
piece, so the last morsel was gone before the cuck
came with another.

"Spare lived on in the old hut, and worked in t
cabbage garden. (Scrub had got the barley field b
cause he was the elder.) Every day his coat gr
more ragged, and the hut more weatherbeaten; b
people remarked that he never looked sad nor sour; a
the wonder was, that from the time they began to ke
his company, the tinker grew kinder to the poor
with which he travelled the country, the beggar-b
kept out of mischief, and the old woman was ne
cross to her cat or angry with the children.

"Every first of April the cuckoo came tapping
their doors with the golden leaf to Scrub and the gr
to Spare. Fairfeather would have entertained h
nobly with wheaten bread and honey, for she had so
notion of persuading him to bring two gold leaves
stead of one; but the cuckoo flew away to eat bar
bread with Spare, saying he was not fit company
fine people, and liked the old hut where he slept
snugly from Christmas till spring.

"Scrub spent the golden leaves, and Spare kept

SPARE AND HIS FRIENDS.

erry ones; and I know not how many years passed in
s manner, when a certain great lord, who owned that
lage, came to the neighbourhood. His castle stood on
e moor. It was ancient and strong, with high towers
d a deep moat. All the country as far as one could
e from the highest turret, belonged to its lord; but he
d not been there for twenty years, and would not
ve come then, only he was melancholy. The cause of
s grief was that he had been prime-minister at court,
d in high favour, till somebody told the crown-prince
at he had spoken disrespectfully concerning the turn-
g out of his royal highness's toes, and the king that he
d not lay on taxes enough, whereon the north country
rd was turned out of office, and banished to his own
tate. There he lived for some weeks in very bad
mper. The servants said nothing would please him,
d the villagers put on their worst clothes lest he
ould raise their rents; but one day in the harvest
ne his lordship chanced to meet Spare gathering
ter cresses at a meadow stream, and fell into talk
th the cobbler.

"How it was nobody could tell, but from the hour of
at discourse the great lord cast away his melancholy:
forgot his lost office and his court enemies, the king's

taxes and the crown-prince's toes, and went about w
a noble train hunting, fishing, and making merry in
hall, where all travellers were entertained and all
poor were welcome. This strange story spread throu
the north country, and great company came to the c
bler's hut—rich men who had lost their money, p
men who had lost their friends, beauties who had gro
old, wits who had gone out of fashion, all came to t
with Spare, and whatever their troubles had been,
went home merry. The rich gave him presents,
poor gave him thanks. Spare's coat ceased to
ragged, he had bacon with his cabbage, and
villagers began to think there was some sense in h

"By this time his fame had reached the capital c
and even the court. There were a great many disc
tented people there besides the king, who had lat
fallen into ill-humour because a neighbouring princ
with seven islands for her dowry, would not marry
eldest son. So a royal messenger was sent to Spa
with a velvet mantle, a diamond ring, and a comma
that he should repair to court immediately.

" 'To-morrow is the first of April,' said Spare, 'a
I will go with you two hours after sunrise.'

"The messenger lodged all night at the castle, and e cuckoo came at sunrise with the merry leaf.

" 'Court is a fine place,' he said when the cobbler told n he was going; 'but I cannot come there, they would r snares and catch me; so be careful of the leaves I ve brought you, and give me a farewell slice of barley ead.'

"Spare was sorry to part with the cuckoo, little as he d had of his company; but he gave him a slice which uld have broken Scrub's heart in former times, it was thick and large; and having sewed up the leaves in e lining of his leathern doublet, he set out with the essenger on his way to court.

"His coming caused great surprise there. Every-dy wondered what the king could see in such a com-on-looking man; but scarce had his majesty con-rsed with him half an hour, when the princess and r seven islands were forgotten, and orders given that feast for all comers should be spread in the banquet ll. The princes of the blood, the great lords and dies, ministers of state, and judges of the land, after at, discoursed with Spare, and the more they talked e lighter grew their hearts, so that such changes had ver been seen at court. The lords forgot their spites

and the ladies their envies, the princes and minist made friends among themselves, and the judg showed no favour.

"As for Spare, he had a chamber assigned him in t palace, and a seat at the king's table; one sent him ri robes and another costly jewels; but in the midst of his grandeur he still wore the leathern doublet, whi the palace servants thought remarkably mean. O day the king's attention being drawn to it by the ch page, his majesty inquired why Spare didn't give it a beggar. But the cobbler answered:

" 'High and mighty monarch, this doublet was wi me before silk and velvet came—I find it easier to we than the court cut; moreover, it serves to keep humble, by recalling the days when it was my holid garment.'

"The king thought this a wise speech, and co manded that no one should find fault with the leathe doublet. So things went, till tidings of his brothe good fortune reached Scrub in the moorland cottage another first of April, when the cuckoo came with t golden leaves, because he had none to carry for Spa

" 'Think of that!' said Fairfeather. 'Here we spending our lives in this humdrum place, and Spa

aking his fortune at court with two or three paltry
een leaves! What would they say to our golden
aes? Let us pack up and make our way to the king's
alace; I'm sure he will make you a lord and me a lady
honour, not to speak of all the fine clothes and pres-
its we shall have.'

"Scrub thought this excellent reasoning, and their
acking up began: but it was soon found that the cot-
ge contained few things fit for carrying to court.
airfeather could not think of her wooden bowls,
oons, and trenchers being seen there. Scrub consid-
ed his lasts and awls better left behind, as without
em, he concluded, no one would suspect him of being
cobbler. So putting on their holiday clothes, Fair-
ather took her looking-glass and Scrub his drinking-
orn, which happened to have a very thin rim of silver,
d each carrying a golden leaf carefully wrapped up
at none might see it till they reached the palace, the
ir set out in great expectation.

"How far Scrub and Fairfeather journeyed I cannot
y, but when the sun was high and warm at noon, they
me into a wood, both tired and hungry.

" 'If I had known it was so far to court,' said Scrub,

'I would have brought the end of that barley loaf whi
we left in the cupboard.'

" 'Husband,' said Fairfeather, 'you shouldn't ha
such mean thoughts: how could one eat barley bre
on the way to a palace? Let us rest ourselves unc
this tree, and look at our golden leaves to see if th
are safe.' In looking at the leaves and talking of th
fine prospects, Scrub and Fairfeather did not percei
that a very thin old woman had slipped from behi
the tree, with a long staff in her hand and a great wal
by her side.

" 'Noble lord and lady,' she said, 'for I know ye
such by your voices, though my eyes are dim and
hearing none of the sharpest, will ye condescend to
me where I may find some water to mix a bottle
mead which I carry in my wallet, because it is
strong for me?'

"As the old woman spoke, she pulled out a la
wooden bottle such as shepherds used in the anci
times, corked with leaves rolled together, and havin
small wooden cup hanging from its handle.

" 'Perhaps ye will do me the favour to taste,'
said. 'It is only made of the best honey. I have a

eam cheese, and a wheaten loaf here, if such honour-
le persons as you would eat the like.'

"Scrub and Fairfeather became very condescending
ter this speech. They were now sure that there must
some appearance of nobility about them; besides,
ey were very hungry, and having hastily wrapped up
e golden leaves, they assured the old woman they
ere not at all proud, notwithstanding the lands and
stles they had left behind them in the north country,
d would willingly help to lighten the wallet. The old
oman could scarcely be persuaded to sit down for
ire humility, but at length she did, and before the
allet was half empty, Scrub and Fairfeather firmly
lieved that there must be something remark-
ly noble-looking about them. This was not entirely
ving to her ingenious discourse. The old woman was
wood-witch; her name was Buttertongue; and all her
me was spent in making mead, which, being boiled
ith curious herbs and spells, had the power of making
l who drank it fall asleep and dream with their eyes
en. She had two dwarfs of sons; one was named
y, and the other Pounce. Wherever their mother
ent they were not far behind; and whoever tasted her
ead was sure to be robbed by the dwarfs.

"Scrub and Fairfeather sat leaning against the c tree. The cobbler had a lump of cheese in his hand; h wife held fast a hunch of bread. Their eyes a mouths were both open, but they were dreaming great grandeur at court, when the old woman rais her shrill voice—

" 'What ho, my sons! come here and carry home t harvest.'

"No sooner had she spoken, than the two litt dwarfs darted out of the neighbouring thicket.

" 'Idle boys!' cried the mother, 'what have ye do to-day to help our living?'

" 'I have been to the city,' said Spy, 'and could s nothing. These are hard times for us—everybo minds their business so contentedly since that co bler came; but here is a leathern doublet which h page threw out of the window; it's of no use, but brought it to let you see I was not idle.' And he toss down Spare's doublet, with the merry leaves in which he had carried like a bundle on his little ba

"To explain how Spy came by it, I must tell you th the forest was not far from the great city where Spa lived in such high esteem. All things had gone w with the cobbler till the king thought that it was qu

ıbecoming to see such a worthy man without a ser-
ınt. His majesty, therefore, to let all men understand
s royal favour toward Spare, appointed one of his
vn pages to wait upon him. The name of this youth
as Tinseltoes, and, though he was the seventh of the
ng's pages, nobody in all the court had grander no-
ons. Nothing could please him that had not gold or
ver about it, and his grandmother feared he would
ng himself for being appointed page to a cobbler. As
r Spare, if anything could have troubled him, this
ken of his majesty's kindness would have done it.

"The honest man had been so used to serving himself
at the page was always in the way, but his merry
aves came to his assistance; and, to the great surprise
his grandmother, Tinseltoes took wonderfully to the
w service. Some said it was because Spare gave him
thing to do but play at bowls all day on the palace-
een. Yet one thing grieved the heart of Tinseltoes,
d that was his master's leathern doublet. But for it
was persuaded people would never remember that
are had been a cobbler, and the page took a deal of
ins to let him see how unfashionable it was at court;
t Spare answered Tinseltoes as he had done the king,
d at last, finding nothing better would do, the page

got up one fine morning earlier than his master, an tossed the leathern doublet out of the back window int a certain lane where Spy found it, and brought it to hi mother.

" 'That nasty thing!' said the old woman; 'where i the good in it?'

"By this time, Pounce had taken everything of valu from Scrub and Fairfeather—the looking-glass, th silver-rimmed horn, the husband's scarlet coat, th wife's gay mantle, and, above all, the golden leave which so rejoiced old Buttertongue and her sons, tha they threw the leathern doublet over the sleeping cob bler for a jest, and went off to their hut in the heart o the forest.

"The sun was going down when Scrub and Fai feather awoke from dreaming that they had been mad a lord and a lady, and sat clothed in silk and velve feasting with the king in his palace-hall. It was a grea disappointment to find their golden leaves and all the best things gone. Scrub tore his hair, and vowed t take the old woman's life, while Fairfeather lamente sore; but Scrub, feeling cold for want of his coat, put o the leathern doublet without asking or caring whenc it came.

"Scarcely was it buttoned on when a change came ver him; he addressed such merry discourse to Fair- eather that, instead of lamentations, she made the ood ring with laughter. Both busied themselves in tting up a hut of boughs, in which Scrub kindled a re with a flint and steel, which, together with his pipe, e had brought unknown to Fairfeather, who had told im the like was never heard of at court. Then they ound a pheasant's nest at the root of an old oak, made meal of roasted eggs, and went to sleep on a heap of ng green grass which they had gathered, with nightin- ales singing all night long in the old trees about them. o it happened that Scrub and Fairfeather stayed day ter day in the forest, making their hut larger and ore comfortable against the winter, living on wild rds' eggs and berries, and never thinking of their lost olden leaves, or their journey to court.

"In the meantime Spare had got up and missed his oublet. Tinseltoes, of course, said he knew nothing out it. The whole palace was searched, and every rvant questioned, till all the court wondered why ch a fuss was made about an old leathern doublet. hat very day things came back to their old fashion. uarrels began among the lords, and jealousies among

the ladies. The king said his subjects did not pay hi half enough taxes, the queen wanted more jewels, th servants took to their old bickerings and got up som new ones. Spare found himself getting wonderfull dull, and very much out of place: nobles began to as what business a cobbler had at the king's table, and h majesty ordered the palace chronicles to be searche for a precedent. The cobbler was too wise to tell a he had lost with that doublet, but being by this tim somewhat familiar with court customs, he proclaime a reward of fifty gold pieces to any one who woul bring him news concerning it.

"Scarcely was this made known in the city, when th gates and outer courts of the palace were filled by me women, and children, some bringing leathern double of every cut and colour; some with tales of what the had heard and seen in their walks about the neighbou hood; and so much news concerning all sorts of gre people came out of these stories, that lords and ladi ran to the king with complaints of Spare as the speak of slander; and his majesty, being now satisfied tha there was no example in all the palace records of suc a retainer, issued a decree banishing the cobbler f

er from court, and confiscating all his goods in favour Tinseltoes.

"That royal edict was scarcely published before the ge was in full possession of his rich chamber, his stly garments, and all the presents the courtiers had ven him; while Spare, having no longer the fifty eces of gold to give, was glad to make his escape out the back window, for fear of the nobles, who vowed be revenged on him, and the crowd, who were pre- ared to stone him for cheating them about his doublet.

"The window from which Spare let himself down ith a strong rope, was that from which Tinseltoes ad tossed the doublet, and as the cobbler came down te in the twilight, a poor woodman, with a heavy ad of fagots, stopped and stared at him in great tonishment.

" 'What's the matter, friend?' said Spare. 'Did you ever see a man coming down from a back window efore?'

" 'Why,' said the woodman, 'the last morning I assed here a leathern doublet came out of that very indow, and I'll be bound you are the owner of it.'

" 'That I am, friend,' said the cobbler. 'Can you tell e which way that doublet went?'

" 'As I walked on,' said the woodman, 'a dwarf, calle Spy, bundled it up and ran off to his mother in th forest.'

" 'Honest friend,' said Spare, taking off the last of h fine clothes (a grass-green mantle edged with gold 'I'll give you this if you will follow the dwarf, and brin me back my doublet.'

" 'It would not be good to carry fagots in,' said th woodman. 'But if you want back your doublet, th road to the forest lies at the end of this lane,' and h trudged away.

"Determined to find his doublet, and sure tha neither crowd nor courtiers could catch him in the fo est, Spare went on his way, and was soon among th tall trees; but neither hut nor dwarf could he se Moreover, the night came on; the wood was dark an tangled, but here and there the moon shone through i alleys, the great owls flitted about, and the nightingal sang. So he went on, hoping to find some place of she ter. At last the red light of a fire, gleaming through thicket, led him to the door of a low hut. It stood ha open, as if there was nothing to fear, and within he sa his brother, Scrub, snoring loudly on a bed of grass, the foot of which lay his own leathern doublet; whi

irfeather, in a kirtle made of plaited rushes, sat asting pheasants' eggs by the fire.

" 'Good evening, mistress,' said Spare, stepping in. "The blaze shone on him, but so changed was her other-in-law with his court-life, that Fairfeather did ot know him, and she answered far more courteously an was her wont.

" 'Good evening, master. Whence come ye so late? ut speak low, for my good man has sorely tired himself eaving wood, and is taking a sleep, as you see, before upper.'

" 'A good rest to him,' said Spare, perceiving he was ot known. 'I come from the court for a day's hunting, nd have lost my way in the forest.'

" 'Sit down and have a share of our supper,' said airfeather, 'I will put some more eggs in the ashes; nd tell me the news of court—I used to think of it long go when I was young and foolish.'

" 'Did you never go there?' said the cobbler. 'So fair dame as you would make the ladies marvel.'

" 'You are pleased to flatter,' said Fairfeather; 'but y husband has a brother there, and we left our moor- nd village to try our fortune also. An old woman ticed us with fair words and strong drink at the

entrance of this forest, where we fell asleep and dream of great things; but when we woke everything had been robbed from us—my looking-glass, my scarlet cloak, my husband's Sunday coat; and, in place of all, the robbers left him that old leathern doublet, which he has worn ever since, and never was so merry in all his life though we live in this poor hut.'

" 'It is a shabby doublet, that,' said Spare, taking up the garment, and seeing that it was his own, for the merry leaves were still sewed in its lining. 'It would be good for hunting in, however—your husband would be glad to part with it, I dare say, in exchange for the handsome cloak;' and he pulled off the green mantle and buttoned on the doublet, much to Fairfeather's delight, who ran and shook Scrub, crying—

" 'Husband! husband! rise and see what a good bargain I have made.'

"Scrub gave one closing snore, and muttered something about the root being hard; but he rubbed his eyes, gazed up at his brother, and said—

" 'Spare, is that really you? How did you like the court, and have you made your fortune?'

" 'That I have, brother,' said Spare, 'in getting back my own good leathern doublet. Come, let us eat eggs

d rest ourselves here this night. In the morning we ll return to our own old hut, at the end of the moor- nd village where the Christmas Cuckoo will come and ing us leaves.'

"Scrub and Fairfeather agreed. So in the morning ey all returned, and found the old hut little the worse r wear and weather. The neighbours came about em to ask the news of court, and see if they had made eir fortunes. Everybody was astonished to find the ree poorer than ever, but somehow they liked to go ck to the hut. Spare brought out the lasts and awls had hidden in a corner; Scrub and he began their d trade, and the whole north country found out that ere never were such cobblers.

"They mended the shoes of lords and ladies as well the common people; everybody was satisfied. Their stom increased from day to day, and all that were sappointed, discontented, or unlucky, came to the t as in old times, before Spare went to court.

"The rich brought them presents, the poor did them rvice. The hut itself changed, no one knew how. owering honeysuckle grew over its roof; red and hite roses grew thick about its door. Moreover, the ristmas Cuckoo always came on the first of April,

bringing three leaves of the merry tree—for Scrub an
Fairfeather would have no more golden ones. So
was with them when I last heard the news of the nor
country."

"What a summer-house that hut would make for m
mamma!" said the Princess Greedalind.

"We must have it brought here bodily," said Quee
Wantall; but the chair was silent, and a lady and tw
noble squires, clad in russet-coloured satin and yello
buskins, the like of which had never been seen at th
court, rose up and said—

"That's our story."

"I have not heard such a tale," said King Winwealt
"since my brother Wisewit went from me, and was lo
in the forest. Redheels, the seventh of my pages,
and bring this little maid a pair of scarlet shoes wi
golden buckles."

The seventh page immediately brought from t
royal store a pair of scarlet satin shoes with buckles
gold. Snowflower never had seen the like before, a
joyfully thanking the king, she dropped a courtes
seated herself and said—"Chair of my grandmoth
take me to the worst kitchen." Immediately the ch

arched away as it came, to the admiration of that ble company.

The little girl was allowed to sleep on some straw at e kitchen fire that night. Next day they gave her ale th the scraps the cook threw away. The feast went with great music and splendour, and the people amoured without; but in the evening King Winealth again fell into low spirits, and the royal comand was told to Snowflower by the chief-scullion, that e and her chair should go to the highest banquet hall, r his majesty wished to hear another story.

When Snowflower had washed her face, and dusted r chair, she went up seated as before, only that she d on the scarlet shoes. Queen Wantall and her ughter looked more spiteful than ever, but some of e company graciously noticed Snowflower's courtesy, d were pleased when she laid down her head, saying: Chair of grandmother, tell me a story."

"Listen," said the clear voice from under the cushion, o the story of Lady Greensleeves."

CHAPTER III

THE LORDS OF THE WHITE AND GREY CASTLES

"ONCE upon a time there lived two noble lord in the east country. Their lands lay between a broad river and an old oak forest whose size was so great that no man knew it. In the midst of this land each lord had a stately castle; one was built of the white freestone, the other of the grey granite. So the one was called Lord of the White Castle, and the other Lord of the Grey.

"There were no lords like them in all the east country for nobleness and bounty. Their tenants lived in

ace and plenty; all strangers were hospitably enter-
ined at their castles; and every autumn they sent
en with axes into the forest to hew down the great
ees, and chop them up into firewood for the poor.
either hedge nor ditch divided their lands, but these
rds never disputed. They had been friends from their
uth. Their ladies had died long ago, but the Lord of
e Grey Castle had a little son, and the Lord of the
hite a little daughter; and when they feasted in each
her's halls it was their custom to say, 'When our chil-
en grow up they will marry, and have our castles and
r lands, and keep our friendship in memory.'

"So the lords and their little children, and tenants,
ed happily till one Michaelmas night, as they were
feasting in the hall of the White Castle, there came
traveller to the gate, who was welcomed and feasted
usual. He had seen many strange sights and coun-
ies, and, like most people, he liked to tell his travels.
he lords were delighted with his tales, as they sat
und the fire drinking wine after supper, and at length
e Lord of the White Castle, who was very curious,
id—

" 'Good stranger, what was the greatest wonder you
er saw in all your travels?'

" 'The most wonderful sight that ever I saw,' replie the traveller, 'was at the end of yonder forest, where an ancient wooden house there sits an old woma weaving her own hair into grey cloth on an old cra loom. When she wants more yarn she cuts off her ow grey hair, and it grows so quickly that though I saw cut in the morning, it was out of the door before noo She told me it was her purpose to sell the cloth, b none of all who came that way had yet bought any, sh asked so great a price; and, if the way were not so lon and dangerous through that wide forest full of boa and wolves, some rich lord like you might buy it for mantle.'

"All who heard this story were astonished; but whe the traveller had gone on his way the Lord of the Whi Castle could neither eat nor sleep for wishing to see th old woman that wove her own hair. At length he mad up his mind to explore the forest in search of he ancient house, and told the Lord of the Grey Castle h intention. Being a prudent man, this lord replied tha traveller's tales were not always to be trusted, an earnestly advised him against undertaking such a lon and dangerous journey, for few that went far into tha forest ever returned. However, when the curious lor

uld go in spite of all, he vowed to bear him company
friendship's sake, and they agreed to set out pri-
tely, lest the other lords of the land might laugh at
em. The Lord of the White Castle had a steward
o had served him many years, and his name was
ckoning Robin. To him he said—

" 'I am going on a long journey with my friend. Be
reful of my goods, deal justly with my tenants, and
ove all things be kind to my little daughter, Love-
ves, till my return;' and the steward answered—

" 'Be sure, my lord, I will.'

"The Lord of the Grey Castle also had a steward who
d served him many years, and his name was Wary
ill. To him he said—

" 'I am going on a journey with my friend. Be care-
of my goods, deal justly with my tenants, and above
things be kind to my little son, Woodwender, till
return;' and his steward answered him—

" 'Be sure, my lord, I will.'

'So these lords kissed their children while they slept,
d set out each with his staff and mantle before sun-
e through the old oak forest. The children missed
ir fathers, the tenants missed their lords. None but
stewards could tell what had become of them; but

seven months wore away, and they did not come bac
The lords had thought their stewards faithful, becau
they served so well under their eyes; but instead
that, both were proud and crafty, and thinking tha
some evil had happened to their masters, they se
themselves to be lords in their room.

"Reckoning Robin had a son called Hardhold, an
Wary Will, a daughter called Drypenny. There w
not a sulkier girl or boy in the country, but their fathe
resolved to make a young lord and lady of them;
they took the silk clothes which Woodwender an
Loveleaves used to wear, to dress them, clothing th
lords' children in frieze and canvas. Their garde
flowers and ivory toys were given to Hardhold an
Drypenny; and at last the stewards' children sat at th
chief tables, and slept in the best chambers, whi
Woodwender and Loveleaves were sent to herd th
swine and sleep on straw in the granary.

"The poor children had no one to take their par
Every morning at sunrise they were sent out—eac
with a barley loaf and a bottle of sour milk, which w
to serve them for breakfast, dinner, and supper—t
watch a great herd of swine on a wide unfenced pastu
bard by the forest. The grass was scanty, and th

ne were continually straying into the wood in
rch of acorns; the children knew that if they were
t the wicked stewards would punish them, and be-
een gathering and keeping their herds in order, they
re readier to sleep on the granary straw at night than
r they had been within their own silken curtains.
ll Woodwender and Loveleaves helped and com-
ted each other, saying their fathers would come back
God would send them some friends: so, in spite of
ne-herding and hard living, they looked blithe and
ndsome as ever; while Hardhold and Drypenny grew
sser and uglier every day, notwithstanding their fine
thes and the best of all things.

'The crafty stewards did not like this. They thought
ir children ought to look genteel, and Woodwender
d Loveleaves like young swineherds; so they sent
m to a wilder pasture, still nearer the forest, and
e them two great black hogs, more unruly than all
rest, to keep. One of these hogs belonged to Hard-
d, and the other to Drypenny. Every evening when
y came home the stewards' children used to come
vn and feed them, and it was their delight to reckon
what price they would bring when properly fattened.

'One sultry day, about midsummer, Woodwender

and Loveleaves sat down in the shadow of a mo rock: the swine grazed about them more quietly th usual, and they plaited rushes and talked to each oth till, as the sun was sloping down the sky, Woodwen saw that the two great hogs were missing. Think they must have gone to the forest, the poor children r to search for them. They heard the thrush singing a the wood-doves calling; they saw the squirrels leapi from bough to bough, and the great deer bounding b but though they searched for hours, no trace of t favourite hogs could be seen. Loveleaves and Woo wender durst not go home without them. Deeper a deeper they ran into the forest, searching and calli but all in vain; and when the woods began to dark with the fall of evening, the children feared they h lost their way.

"It was known that they never feared the forest, r all the boars and wolves that were in it; but be weary, they wished for some place of shelter, and to a green path through the trees, thinking it might le to the dwelling of some hermit or forester. A fai way Woodwender and Loveleaves had never walk The grass was soft and mossy, a hedge of wild roses a honeysuckle grew on either side, and the red light

THE TWO GREAT HOGS WERE MISSING.

set streamed through the tall trees above. On they
ıt, and it led them straight to a great open dell, cov-
d with the loveliest flowers, bordered with banks of
d strawberries, and all overshadowed by one enor-
us oak, whose like had never been seen in grove or
est. Its branches were as large as full-grown trees.
trunk was wider than a country church, and its
ght like that of a castle. There were mossy seats at
great root, and when the tired children had gathered
many strawberries as they cared for, they sat down
one, hard by a small spring that bubbled up as clear
crystal. The huge oak was covered with thick ivy,
which thousands of birds had their nests. Wood-
der and Loveleaves watched them flying home from
parts of the forest, and at last they saw a lady com-
by the same path which led them to the dell. She
e a gown of russet colour; her yellow hair was
ded and bound with a crimson fillet. In her right
d she carried a holly branch; but the most remark-
part of her attire was a pair of long sleeves, as
n as the very grass.

'Who are you?' she said, 'that sit so late beside my
?' and the children told her their story, how they

had first lost the hogs, then their way, and were afr
to go home to the wicked stewards.

" 'Well,' said the lady, 'ye are the fairest swinehe
that ever came this way. Choose whether ye will
home and keep hogs for Hardhold and Drypenny,
live in the free forest with me.'

" 'We will stay with you,' said the children, 'for
like not keeping swine. Besides, our fathers w
through this forest, and we may meet them some
coming home.'

"While they spoke, the lady slipped her holly bra
through the ivy, as if it had been a key—presentl
door opened in the oak, and there was a fair hou
The windows were of rock crystal, but they could
be seen from without. The walls and floor were cove
with thick green moss, as soft as velvet. There w
low seats and a round table, vessels of carved wood
hearth inlaid with curious stones, an oven, and a st
chamber for provisions against the winter. When t
stepped in, the lady said—

" 'A hundred years have I lived here, and my nam
Lady Greensleeves. No friend or servant have I
except my dwarf Corner, who comes to me at the en
harvest with his handmill, his pannier, and his a

h these he grinds the nuts, and gathers the berries,
l cleaves the firewood, and blithely we live all the
ıter. But Corner loves the frost and fears the sun,
l when the topmost boughs begin to bud, he returns
ıis country far in the north, so I am lonely in the
ımer time.'

By this discourse the children saw how welcome
y were. Lady Greensleeves gave them deer's milk
l cakes of nut-flour, and soft green moss to sleep on;
l they forgot all their troubles, the wicked stewards,
l the straying swine. Early in the morning a troop
loes came to be milked, fairies brought flowers, and
ls brought berries, to show Lady Greensleeves what
l bloomed and ripened. She taught the children to
ke cheese of the does' milk, and wine of the wood-
ries. She showed them the stores of honey which
l bees had made, and left in hollow trees, the rarest
ıts of the forest, and the herbs that made all its
ıtures tame.

All that summer Woodwender and Loveleaves lived
h her in the great oak-tree, free from toil and care;
l the children would have been happy, but they
ld hear no tidings of their fathers. At last the
ves began to fade, and the flowers to fall; Lady

Greensleeves said that Corner was coming; and c moonlight night she heaped sticks on the fire, and her door open, when Woodwender and Loveleaves w going to sleep, saying she expected some old friends tell her the news of the forest.

"Loveleaves was not quite so curious as her fath the Lord of the White Castle; but she kept awake see what would happen, and terribly frightened little girl was when in walked a great brown bear.

" 'Good evening, lady,' said the bear.

" 'Good evening, bear,' said Lady Greensleev 'What is the news in your neighbourhood?'

" 'Not much,' said the bear; 'only the fawns growing very cunning—one can't catch above three a day.'

" 'That's bad news,' said Lady Greensleeves; a immediately in walked a great wild cat.

" 'Good evening, lady,' said the cat.

" 'Good evening, cat,' said Lady Greensleev 'What is the news in your neighbourhood?'

" 'Not much,' said the cat; 'only the birds are gro ing very plentiful—it is not worth one's while to ca them.'

'That's good news,' said Lady Greensleeves; and in
v a great black raven.
'Good evening, lady,' said the raven.
'Good evening, raven,' said Lady Greensleeves.
hat is the news in your neighbourhood?'
'Not much,' said the raven; 'only in a hundred
ars or so we shall be very genteel and private—the
es will be so thick.'
'How is that?' said Lady Greensleeves.
'Oh!' said the raven, 'have you not heard how the
g of the forest fairies laid a spell on two noble lords,
o were travelling through his dominions to see the
woman that weaves her own hair? They had
nned his oaks every year, cutting firewood for the
or: so the king met them in the likeness of a hunter,
l asked them to drink out of his oaken goblet,
ause the day was warm; and when the two lords
nk, they forgot their lands and their tenants, their
tles and their children, and minded nothing in all
s world but the planting of acorns, which they do
and night, by the power of the spell, in the heart
he forest, and will never cease till some one makes
m pause in their work before the sun sets, and then
spell will be broken.'

"'Ah!' said Lady Greensleeves, 'he is a great prin
that king of the forest fairies; and there is worse wo
in the world than planting acorns.'

"Soon after, the bear, the cat, and the raven ba
Lady Greensleeves good night. She closed the do
put out the light, and went to sleep on the soft m
as usual.

"In the morning Loveleaves told Woodwender wh
she had heard, and they went to Lady Greensleev
where she milked the does, and said—

"'We heard what the raven told last night, and
know the two lords are our fathers: tell us how t
spell may be broken!'

"'I fear the king of the forest fairies,' said La
Greensleeves, 'because I live here alone, and have
friend but my dwarf Corner; but I will tell you wh
you may do. At the end of the path which leads fr
this dell turn your faces to the north, and you will fi
a narrow way sprinkled over with black feathers—ke
that path, no matter how it winds, and it will lead y
straight to the ravens' neighbourhood, where you w
find your fathers planting acorns under the forest tre
Watch till the sun is near setting, and tell them t
most wonderful things you know to make them for

eir work; but be sure to tell nothing but truth, and nk nothing but running water, or you will fall into e power of the fairy king.'

'The children thanked her for this good counsel. She cked up cakes and cheese for them in a bag of woven ass, and they soon found the narrow way sprinkled er with black feathers. It was very long, and wound rough the thick trees in so many circles that the chil-en were often weary, and sat down to rest. When the ght came, they found a mossy hollow in the trunk of old tree, where they laid themselves down, and slept the summer night—for Woodwender and Loveleaves ver feared the forest. So they went, eating their kes and cheese when they were hungry, drinking m the running stream, and sleeping in the hollow es, till on the evening of the seventh day they came o the ravens' neighbourhood. The tall trees were len with nests and black with ravens. There was thing to be heard but continual cawing; and in a at opening where the oaks grew thinnest, the chil-en saw their own fathers busy planting acorns. Each d had on the velvet mantle in which he left his castle, t it was worn to rags with rough work in the forest. eir hair and beards had grown long; their hands

were soiled with earth; each had an old wooden spa and on all sides lay heaps of acorns. The children call them by their names, and ran to kiss them, ea saying—'Dear father, come back to your castle a your people!' but the lords replied—

" 'We know of no castles and no people. There nothing in all this world but oak-trees and acorns.'

"Woodwender and Loveleaves told them of all th former state in vain—nothing would make them pa for a minute. So the poor children first sat down a cried, and then slept on the cold grass, for the sun s and the lords worked on. When they awoke it w broad day; Woodwender cheered up Loveleaves, sayi —'We are hungry, and there are still two cakes in t bag, let us share one of them—who knows but som thing may happen?'

"So they divided the cake, and ran to the lords, sa ing—'Dear fathers, eat with us,' but the lords said

" 'There is no use for meat or drink. Let us pla our acorns.'

"Loveleaves and Woodwender sat down, and ate th cake in great sorrow. When they had finished, bo went to a stream hard by, and began to drink the cl water with a large acorn shell; and as they drank th

me through the oaks a gay young hunter, his mantle
s green as the grass: about his neck there hung a
stal bugle, and in his hand he carried a huge oaken
olet, carved with flowers and leaves, and rimmed
th crystal. Up to the brim it was filled with milk, on
ich the rich cream floated; and as the hunter came
ar, he said—'Fair children, leave that muddy water,
d come and drink with me;' but Woodwender and
veleaves answered—

' 'Thanks, good hunter; but we have promised to
nk nothing but running water.' Still the hunter
me nearer with his goblet, saying—

' 'The water is foul: it may do for swineherds and
odcutters, but not for such fair children as you. Tell
, are you not the children of mighty kings? Were
u not reared in palaces?' But the boy and girl
swered him—

' 'No: we were reared in castles, and are the children
yonder lords; tell us how the spell that is upon them
y be broken!' and immediately the hunter turned
m them with an angry look, poured out the milk
on the ground and went away with his empty goblet.
'Loveleaves and Woodwender were sorry to see the
h cream spilled, but they remembered Lady Green-

sleeves' warning, and seeing they could do no bett
each got a withered branch and began to help the lor
scratching up the ground with the sharp end, and plan
ing acorns; but their fathers took no notice of the
nor all that they could say; and when the sun gr
warm at noon, they went again to drink at the runni
stream. Then there came through the oaks anoth
hunter, older than the first, and clothed in yello
about his neck there hung a silver bugle, and in h
hand he carried an oaken goblet, carved with leav
and fruit, rimmed with silver, and filled with mead
the brim. This hunter also asked them to drink, t
them the stream was full of frogs, and asked them
they were not a young prince and princess dwelling
the woods for their pleasure, but when Woodwen
and Loveleaves answered as before—'We have pro
ised to drink only running water, and are the childr
of yonder lords: tell us how the spell may be broken!"
he turned from them with an angry look, poured o
the mead, and went his way.

"All that afternoon the children worked beside th
fathers, planting acorns with the withered branch
but the lords would mind neither them nor their wor
And when the evening drew near they were very hu

r; so the children divided their last cake, and when persuasion would make the lords eat with them, ey went to the banks of the stream, and began to eat d drink, though their hearts were heavy.

'The sun was getting low, and the ravens were com- home to their nests in the high trees; but one, that emed old and weary, alighted near them to drink at e stream. As they ate the raven lingered, and picked the small crumbs that fell.

' 'Brother,' said Loveleaves, 'this raven is surely ngry; let us give it a little bit, though it is our last ke.'

'Woodwender agreed, and each gave a bit to the ven; but its great bill finished the morsels in a mo- nt, and hopping nearer, it looked them in the face turns.

' The poor raven is still hungry,' said Woodwender, d he gave it another bit. When that was gobbled, it me to Loveleaves, who gave it a bit too, and so on the raven had eaten the whole of their last cake.

' 'Well,' said Woodwender, 'at least, we can have a nk.' But as they stooped to the water, there came ough the oaks another hunter, older than the last, d clothed in scarlet: about his neck there hung a

golden bugle, and in his hand he carried a huge oak
goblet, carved with ears of corn and clusters of grap
rimmed with gold, and filled to the brim with wi
He also said—

" 'Leave this muddy water, and drink with me. It
full of toads, and not fit for such fair children. Sur
ye are from fairyland, and were reared in its quee
palace!' But the children said—

" 'We will drink nothing but this water, and yon
lords are our fathers: tell us how the spell may
broken!' And the hunter turned from them with
angry look, poured out the wine on the grass, and we
his way. When he was gone, the old raven looked
into their faces, and said—

" 'I have eaten your last cake, and I will tell you h
the spell may be broken. Yonder is the sun, goi
down behind yon western trees. Before it sets, go
the lords, and tell them how their stewards used y
and made you herd hogs for Hardhold and Drypen
When you see them listening, catch up their wood
spades, and keep them if you can till the sun g
down.'

"Woodwender and Loveleaves thanked the rav
and where it flew they never stopped to see, but r

ng to the lords began to tell as they were bidden. At st the lords would not listen, but as the children lated how they had been made to sleep on straw, how ey had been sent to herd hogs in the wild pasture, d what trouble they had with the unruly swine, the orn planting grew slower, and at last they dropped eir spades. Then Woodwender, catching up his ther's spade, ran to the stream and threw it in. Love- aves did the same for the Lord of the White Castle. hat moment the sun disappeared behind the western ks, and the lords stood up, looking, like men just ake, on the forest, on the sky, and on their children. "So this strange story has ended, for Woodwender d Loveleaves went home rejoicing with their fathers. ch lord returned to his castle, and all their tenants ade merry. The fine toys and the silk clothes, the wer-gardens and the best chambers, were taken from rdhold and Drypenny, for the lords' children got em again; and the wicked stewards, with their cross y and girl, were sent to herd swine, and live in huts the wild pasture, which everybody said became them tter. The Lord of the White Castle never again shed to see the old woman that wove her own hair, d the Lord of the Grey Castle continued to be his

friend. As for Woodwender and Loveleaves, they m with no more misfortunes, but grew up, and were ma ried, and inherited the two castles and the broad lan of their fathers. Nor did they forget the lonely Lac Greensleeves, for it was known in the east country th she and her dwarf Corner always came to feast wi them in the Christmas time, and at midsummer th always went to live with her in the great oak in t forest."

"Oh! mamma, if we had that oak!" said the Prince Greedalind.

"Where does it grow?" said Queen Wantall; but t chair was silent, and a noble lord and lady, clad green velvet, flowered with gold, rose up and said-

"That's our story."

"Excepting the tale of yesterday," said King Wi wealth, "I have not heard such a story since my broth Wisewit went from me, and was lost in the fores Gaygarters, the sixth of my pages, go and bring th maiden a pair of white silk hose with golden clocks them."

Queen Wantall and Princess Greedalind at th looked crosser than ever; but Gaygarters brought t

ite silk hose, and Snowflower, having dropped her
urtesy, and taken her seat, was carried once more to
e kitchen, where they gave her a mattress that night,
d next day she got the ends of choice dishes.

The feast, the music, and the dancing went on, so did
e envies within and the clamours without the palace.
the evening King Winwealth fell again into low
irits after supper, and a message coming down from
e banquet hall, the kitchen-maid told Snowflower to
epare herself, and go up with her grandmother's
air, for his majesty wished to hear another story.
aving washed her face and combed her hair, put on
r scarlet shoes, and her gold-clocked hose, Snow-
wer went up as before, seated in her grandmother's
air; and after courtesying as usual to the king, the
een, the princess, and the noble company, the little
l laid down her head, saying—"Chair of my grand-
ther, tell me a story;" and a clear voice from under
e cushion said—

'Listen to the story of the Greedy Shepherd "

CHAPTER IV

THE GREEDY SHEPHERD

"ONCE upon a time there lived in the sout country two brothers, whose business it wa to keep sheep on a great grassy plain, whic was bounded on the one side by a forest, and on th other by a chain of high hills. No one lived on tha plain but shepherds, who dwelt in low cottages thatche with heath, and watched their sheep so carefully tha no lamb was ever lost, nor had one of the shepherd ever travelled beyond the foot of the hills and the skir of the forest.

"There were none among them more careful than ese two brothers, one of whom was called Clutch, and e other Kind. Though brethren born, two men of stant countries could not be more unlike in dispotion. Clutch thought of nothing in this world but ow to catch and keep some profit for himself, while ind would have shared his last morsel with a hungry g. This covetous mind made Clutch keep all his ther's sheep when the old man was dead and gone, ecause he was the elder brother, allowing Kind nothg but the place of a servant to help him in looking ter them. Kind wouldn't quarrel with his brother r the sake of the sheep, so he helped him to keep em, and Clutch had all his own way. This made him greeable. For some time the brothers lived peaceably their father's cottage, which stood low and lonely nder the shadow of a great sycamore-tree, and kept eir flock with pipe and crook on the grassy plain, till w troubles arose through Clutch's covetousness.

"On that plain there was neither town, nor city, nor arket-place, where people might sell or buy, but the epherds cared little for trade. The wool of their cks made them clothes; their milk gave them butter d cheese. At feast times every family killed a lamb

or so; their fields yielded them wheat for bread. Th forest supplied them with firewood for winter; an every midsummer, which is the sheep-shearing tim traders from a certain far-off city came through it b an ancient way to purchase all the wool the shepher could spare, and give them in exchange either goods c money.

"One midsummer it so happened that these trade praised the wool of Clutch's flock above all they foun of the plain, and gave him the highest price for it. Tha was an unlucky happening for the sheep: from thence forth Clutch thought he could never get enough woo off them. At the shearing time nobody clipped so clos and, in spite of all Kind could do or say, he left the poo sheep as bare as if they had been shaven; and as soo as the wool grew long enough to keep them warm, h was ready with the shears again—no matter how chill might be the days or how near the winter. Kind didn like these doings, and many a debate they cause between him and his brother. Clutch always tried t persuade him that close clipping was good for th sheep, and Kind always strove to make him think h had got all the wool—so they were never done with dis putes. Still Clutch sold the wool, and stored up hi

ofits, and one midsummer after another passed. The epherds began to think him a rich man, and close pping might have become the fashion, but for a ange thing which happened to his flock.

'The wool had grown well that summer. He had ken two crops off them, and was thinking of a third, though the misty mornings of autumn were come, d the cold evenings made the shepherds put on their nter cloaks,—when first the lambs, and then the es, began to stray away; and search as the brothers uld, none of them could be found. Clutch blamed nd with being careless, and watched with all his ght. Kind knew it was not his fault, but he looked arper than ever. Still the straying went on. The cks grew smaller every day, and all the brothers uld find out was, that the closest clipped were the st to go; and, count the flock when they might, some re sure to be missed at the folding.

'Kind grew tired of watching, and Clutch lost his ep with vexation. The other shepherds, over whom had boasted of his wool and his profits, were not ry to see pride having a fall. Most of them pitied nd, but all of them agreed that they had marvellous luck, and kept as far from them as they could for fear

of sharing it. Still the flock melted away as the month wore on. Storms and cold weather never stopped them from straying, and when the spring came back nothing remained with Clutch and Kind but three old ewes, the quietest and lamest of their whole flock. They were watching these ewes one evening in the primrose time when Clutch, who had never kept his eyes off them that day, said—

" 'Brother, there is wool to be had on their backs.'

" 'It is too little to keep them warm,' said Kind. 'The east wind still blows sometimes;' but Clutch was off to the cottage for the bag and shears.

"Kind was grieved to see his brother so covetous, and to divert his mind he looked up at the great hills: it was a sort of comfort to him, ever since their losses began, to look at them evening and morning. Now their far-off heights were growing crimson with the setting sun, but as he looked, three creatures like sheep scoured up a cleft in one of them as fleet as any deer: and when Kind turned, he saw his brother coming with the bag and shears, but not a single ewe was to be seen. Clutch's first question was, what had become of them; and when Kind told him what he saw, the elder brother scolded

CLUTCH, KIND, AND THE THREE OLD EWES.

m with might and main for ever lifting his eyes off em.

" 'Much good the hills and the sunset do us,' said he, ow that we have not a single sheep. The other shepherds will hardly give us room among them at shearing me or harvest; but for my part, I'll not stay on this ain to be despised for poverty. If you like to come th me, and be guided by my advice, we shall get rvice somewhere. I have heard my father say that ere were great shepherds living in old times beyond e hills; let us go and see if they will take us for sheepys.'

"Kind would rather have stayed and tilled his ther's wheat-field, hard by the cottage; but since his der brother would go, he resolved to bear him comny. Accordingly, next morning Clutch took his bag d shears, Kind took his crook and pipe, and away ey went over the plain and up the hills. All who w them thought that they had lost their senses, for shepherd had gone there for a hundred years, and thing was to be seen but wide moorlands, full of gged rocks, and sloping up, it seemed, to the very y. Kind persuaded his brother to take the direction e sheep had taken, but the ground was so rough and

steep that after two hours' climbing they would gladl
have turned back, if it had not been that their shee
were gone, and the shepherds would laugh at them.

"By noon they came to the stony cleft, up which th
three old ewes had scoured like deer; but both wer
tired, and sat down to rest. Their feet were sore, an
their hearts were heavy; but as they sat there, ther
came a sound of music down the hills, as if a thousan
shepherds had been playing on their tops. Clutch an
Kind had never heard such music before. As the
listened, the soreness passed from their feet, and th
heaviness from their hearts; and getting up, they fo
lowed the sound up the cleft, and over a wide heath
covered with purple bloom; till at sunset, they came t
the hill-top, and saw a broad pasture, where violet
grew thick among the grass, and thousands of snow
white sheep were feeding, while an old man sat in th
midst of them, playing on his pipe. He wore a lon
coat, the colour of the holly leaves; his hair hung to h
waist, and his beard to his knees, but both were a
white as snow, and he had the countenance of one wh
had led a quiet life, and known no cares nor losses.

" 'Good father,' said Kind, for his elder brothe
hung back and was afraid, 'tell us what land is this, an

here can we find service; for my brother and I are epherds, and can well keep flocks from straying, ough we have lost our own.'

" 'These are the hill pastures,' said the old man, 'and am the ancient shepherd. My flocks never stray, but have employment for you. Which of you can shear st?'

" 'Good father,' said Clutch, taking courage, 'I am e closest shearer in all the plain country: you would t find as much wool as would make a thread on a eep when I have done with it.'

" 'You are the man for my business,' replied the old epherd. 'When the moon rises, I will call the flock u have to shear. Till then sit down and rest, and ke your supper out of my wallet.'

"Clutch and Kind gladly sat down by him among the olets, and opening a leathern bag which hung by his le, the old man gave them cakes and cheese, and a rn cup to drink from a stream hard by. The brothers t fit for any work after that meal; and Clutch joiced in his own mind at the chance he had got for owing his skill with the shears. 'Kind will see how eful it is to cut close,' he thought to himself: but they t with the old man, telling him the news of the plain.

till the sun went down and the moon rose, and all th snow-white sheep gathered and laid themselves dow behind them. Then he took his pipe and played merry tune, when immediately there was heard a gre howling, and up the hills came a troop of shagg wolves, with hair so long that their eyes could scarce be seen. Clutch would have fled for fear, but th wolves stopped, and the old man said to him—

" 'Rise, and shear—this flock of mine have too muc wool on them.'

"Clutch had never shorn wolves before, yet h couldn't think of losing the good service, and wer forward with a stout heart; but the first of the wolv showed its teeth, and all the rest raised such a howl th moment he came near them, that Clutch was glad t throw down his shears, and run behind the old man f safety.

" 'Good father,' cried he, 'I will shear sheep, but no wolves.'

" 'They must be shorn,' said the old man, 'or you g back to the plains, and them after you; but whichev of you can shear them will get the whole flock.'

"On hearing this, Clutch began to exclaim on h hard fortune, and his brother who had brought hi

tere to be hunted and devoured by wolves; but Kind, inking that things could be no worse, caught up the ears he had thrown away in his fright, and went oldly up to the nearest wolf. To his great surprise ie wild creature seemed to know him, and stood uietly to be shorn, while the rest of the flock gathered ound as if waiting their turn. Kind clipped neatly, it not too close, as he had wished his brother to do ith the sheep, and heaped up the hair on one side. hen he had done with one, another came forward, nd Kind went on shearing by the bright moonlight till ie whole flock were shorn. Then the old man said—

" 'Ye have done well, take the wool and the flock for our wages, return with them to the plain, and if you lease, take this little-worth brother of yours for a boy keep them.'

"Kind did not much like keeping wolves, but before e could make answer, they had all changed into the ery sheep which had strayed away so strangely. All f them had grown fatter and thicker of fleece, and the air he had cut off lay by his side, a heap of wool so fine nd soft that its like had never been seen on the plain.

"Clutch gathered it up in his empty bag, and glad as he to go back to the plain with his brother; for the

old man sent them away with their flock, saying n man must see the dawn of day on that pasture but him self, for it was the ground of the fairies. So Clutch an Kind went home with great gladness. All the shep herds came to hear their wonderful story, and ev after liked to keep near them because they had suc good luck. They keep the sheep together till this da but Clutch has grown less greedy, and Kind alone us the shears."

With these words the voice ceased, and two shep herds, clad in grass-green and crowned with garland rose up, and said—

"That's our story."

"Mamma," said Princess Greedalind, "what a love playground that violet pasture would make for me!"

"What wool could be had off all those snow white sheep!" said Queen Wantall; but King Wi wealth said—

"Excepting yesterday's tale, and the one that wer before it, I have not heard such a story as that sinc my brother Wisewit went from me, and was lost i the forest. Spangledhose, the fifth of my pages, ris and bring this maiden a white satin gown."

Snowflower took the white satin gown, thanked th

ing, courtesied to the good company, and went down h her chair to the best kitchen. That night they gave er a new blanket, and next day she had a cold pie for inner. The music, the feast, and the spite continued lithin the palace: so did the clamours without; and is majesty, falling into low spirits, as usual, after sup- er, one of the under cooks told Snowflower that a essage had come down from the highest banquet hall r her to go up with her grandmother's chair, and tell nother story. Snowflower accordingly dressed herself the red shoes, the gold-clocked hose, and the white tin gown. All the company were glad to see her and er chair coming, except the queen and the Princess reedalind; and when the little girl had made her cour- sy and laid down her head, saying—"Chair of my randmother, tell me a story," the same clear voice lid—

"Listen to the story of Fairyfoot."

CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF FAIRYFOOT

"ONCE upon a time there stood far away in th west country a town called Stumpinghame It contained seven windmills, a royal palace a market-place, and a prison, with every other con venience befitting the capital of a kingdom. A capita city was Stumpinghame, and its inhabitants though it the only one in the world. It stood in the midst of great plain, which for three leagues round its walls wa covered with corn, flax, and orchards. Beyond tha lay a great circle of pasture land, seven leagues i

readth, and it was bounded on all sides by a forest so nick and old that no man in Stumpinghame knew its xtent; and the opinion of the learned was, that it eached to the end of the world.

"There were strong reasons for this opinion. First, hat forest was known to be inhabited time out of mind y the fairies, and no hunter cared to go beyond its orders—so all the west country believed it to be sol- lly full of old trees to the heart. Secondly, the people f Stumpinghame were no travellers—man, woman, nd child had feet so large and heavy that it was by no neans convenient to carry them far. Whether it was ne nature of the place or the people, I cannot tell, but reat feet had been the fashion there time immemorial, nd the higher the family the larger were they. It as, therefore, the aim of everybody above the degree f shepherds, and such-like rustics, to swell out and nlarge their feet by way of gentility; and so successful ere they in these undertakings that, on a pinch, espectable people's slippers would have served for anniers.

"Stumpinghame had a king of its own, and his name as Stiffstep; his family was very ancient and large- oted. His subjects called him Lord of the World,

and he made a speech to them every year concernin the grandeur of his mighty empire. His queen, Han merheel, was the greatest beauty in Stumpingham Her majesty's shoe was not much less than a fishin boat; their six children promised to be quite as han some, and all went well with them till the birth of the seventh son.

"For a long time nobody about the palace cou understand what was the matter—the ladies-in-wai ing looked so astonished, and the king so vexed; b at last it was whispered through the city that t queen's seventh child had been born with such mise ably small feet that they resembled nothing ever see or heard of in Stumpinghame, except the feet of t fairies.

"The chronicles furnished no example of such a affliction ever before happening in the royal famil The common people thought it portended some gre calamity to the city; the learned men began to wri books about it; and all the relations of the king an queen assembled at the palace to mourn with the over their singular misfortune. The whole court an most of the citizens helped in this mourning, but whe it had lasted seven days they all found out it was

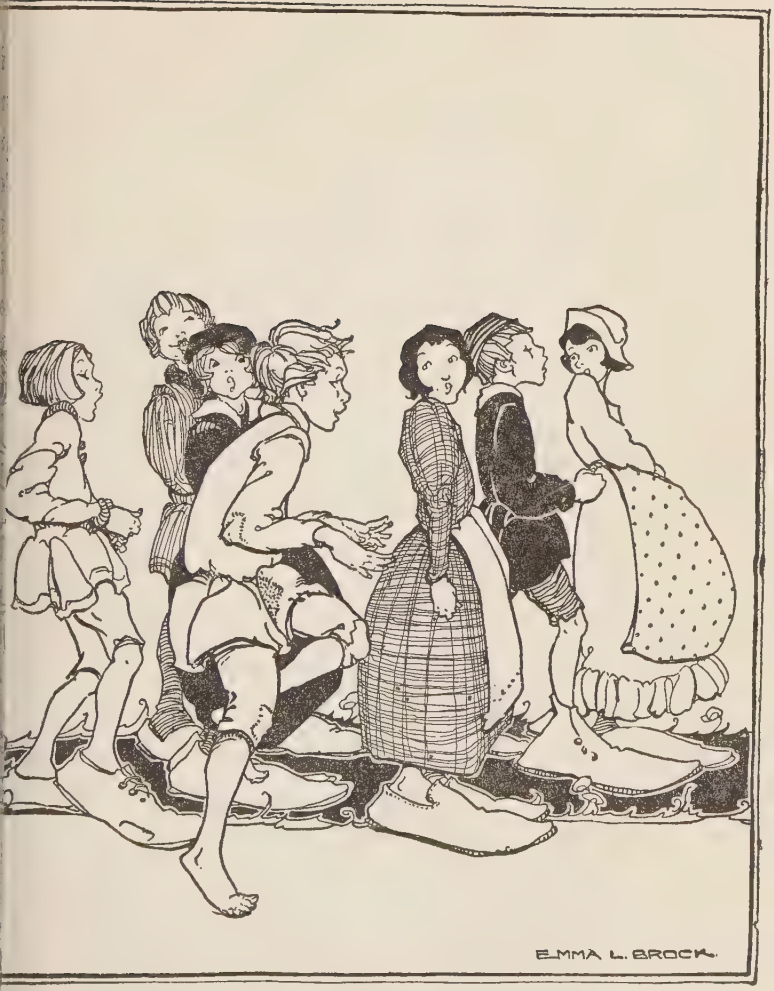
use. So the relations went to their homes, and the ople took to their work. If the learned men's books ere written, nobody ever read them; and to cheer up e queen's spirits, the young prince was sent privately t to the pasture lands, to be nursed among the epherds.

"The chief man there was called Fleecefold, and his fe's name was Rough Ruddy. They lived in a snug tage with their son Blackthorn and their daughter ownberry, and were thought great people, because ey kept the king's sheep. Moreover, Fleecefold's nily were known to be ancient; and Rough Ruddy asted that she had the largest feet in all the pas- res. The shepherds held them in high respect, and rew still higher when the news spread that the king's enth son had been sent to their cottage. People me from all quarters to see the young prince, and at were the lamentations over his misfortune in ving such small feet.

"The king and queen had given him fourteen names, inning with Augustus—such being the fashion in t royal family; but the honest country people could remember so many; besides, his feet were the most narkable thing about the child, so with one accord

they called him Fairyfoot. At first it was feared th might be high-treason, but when no notice was tak by the king or his ministers, the shepherds conclud it was no harm, and the boy never had another nan throughout the pastures. At court it was not thoug polite to speak of him at all. They did not keep l birthday, and he was never sent for at Christmas, b cause the queen and her ladies could not bear t sight. Once a year the undermost scullion was se to see how he did, with a bundle of his next brothe cast-off clothes; and, as the king grew old and cro it was said he had thoughts of disowning him.

"So Fairyfoot grew in Fleecefold's cottage. Perha the country air made him fair and rosy—for all agre that he would have been a handsome boy but for l small feet, with which nevertheless he learned to wa and in time to run and to jump, thereby amazi everybody, for such doings were not known among t children of Stumpinghame. The news of court, ho ever, travelled to the shepherds, and Fairyfoot w despised among them. The old people thought h unlucky ; the children refused to play with hi Fleecefold was ashamed to have him in his cottage, b he durst not disobey the king's orders. Moreov



FAIRYFOOT AND THE STUMPINGHAME CHILDREN.

lackthorn wore most of the clothes brought by the ullion. At last, Rough Ruddy found out that the ght of such horrid jumping would make her children ulgar; and, as soon as he was old enough, she sent airyfoot every day to watch some sickly sheep that razed on a wild, weedy pasture, hard by the forest.

"Poor Fairyfoot was often lonely and sorrowful; any a time he wished his feet would grow larger, or hat people wouldn't notice them so much; and all the omfort he had was running and jumping by himself the wild pasture, and thinking that none of the shep-erds' children could do the like, for all their pride of heir great feet.

"Tired of this sport, he was lying in the shadow of a ossy rock one warm summer's noon, with the sheep eding around, when a robin, pursued by a great hawk, ew into the old velvet cap which lay on the ground eside him. Fairyfoot covered it up, and the hawk, ightened by his shout, flew away.

" 'Now you may go, poor robin!' he said, opening e cap: but instead of the bird, out sprang a little an dressed in russet brown, and looking as if he ere an hundred years old. Fairyfoot could not speak r astonishment, but the little man said—

" 'Thank you for your shelter, and be sure I will d
as much for you. Call on me if you are ever in troubl
my name is Robin Goodfellow;' and darting off, H
was out of sight in an instant. For days the boy won
dered who that little man could be, but he told nobod
for the little man's feet were as small as his own, an
it was clear he would be no favourite in Stumping
hame. Fairyfoot kept the story to himself, and at la
midsummer came. That evening there was a fea
among the shepherds. There were bonfires on the hill
and fun in the villages. But Fairyfoot sat alone besid
his sheepfold, for the children of his village had refuse
to let him dance with them about the bonfire, and H
had gone there to bewail the size of his feet, whic
came between him and so many good things. Fairy
foot had never felt so lonely in all his life, and remem
bering the little man, he plucked up spirit, and cried—

" 'Ho! Robin Goodfellow!'

" 'Here I am,' said a shrill voice at his elbow; an
there stood the little man himself.

" 'I am very lonely, and no one will play with m
because my feet are not large enough,' said Fairyfoo

" 'Come then and play with us,' said the little ma
'We lead the merriest lives in the world, and care f

obody's feet; but all companies have their own man-
ers, and there are two things you must mind among
s: first, do as you see the rest doing; and secondly,
ever speak of anything you may hear or see, for we
nd the people of this country have had no friendship
ver since large feet came in fashion.'

" 'I will do that, and anything more you like,' said
airyfoot; and the little man, taking his hand, led him
ver the pasture into the forest, and along a mossy path
mong old trees wreathed with ivy (he never knew
ow far) till they heard the sound of music, and came
pon a meadow where the moon shone as bright as
ay, and all the flowers of the year—snowdrops, vio-
ts, primroses, and cowslips—bloomed together in the
ick grass. There were a crowd of little men and
omen, some clad in russet colour, but far more in
reen, dancing round a little well as clear as crystal.
nd under great rose-trees which grew here and there
the meadow, companies were sitting round low
bles covered with cups of milk, dishes of honey, and
rved wooden flagons filled with clear red wine. The
ttle man led Fairyfoot up to the nearest table, handed
im one of the flagons, and said—

" 'Drink to the good company!'

"Wine was not very common among the shepherd of Stumpinghame, and the boy had never tasted such drink as that before; for scarcely had it gone down when he forgot all his troubles—how Blackthorn and Brownberry wore his clothes, how Rough Ruddy sent him to keep the sickly sheep, and the children would not dance with him: in short, he forgot the whole mis fortune of his feet, and it seemed to his mind that he was a king's son, and all was well with him. All the little people about the well cried—

" 'Welcome! welcome!' and every one said—'Come and dance with me!' So Fairyfoot was as happy as a prince, and drank milk and ate honey till the moon was low in the sky, and then the little man took him by the hand, and never stopped nor stayed till he was at his own bed of straw in the cottage corner.

"Next morning Fairyfoot was not tired for all his dancing. Nobody in the cottage had missed him, and he went out with the sheep as usual; but every night all that summer, when the shepherds were safe in bed, the little man came and took him away to dance in the forest. Now he did not care to play with the sheep herds' children, nor grieve that his father and mother had forgotten him, but watched the sheep all day sing

ng to himself or plaiting rushes; and when the sun vent down, Fairyfoot's heart rejoiced at the thought f meeting that merry company.

"The wonder was that he was never tired nor sleepy, s people are apt to be who dance all night; but before he summer was ended Fairyfoot found out the reason.)ne night, when the moon was full, and the last of the ipe corn rustling in the fields, Robin Goodfellow came or him as usual, and away they went to the flowery reen. The fun there was high, and Robin was in aste. So he only pointed to the carved cup from hich Fairyfoot every night drank the clear red wine.

" 'I am not thirsty, and there is no use losing time,' nought the boy to himself, and he joined the dance; ut never in all his life did Fairyfoot find such hard ork as to keep pace with the company. Their feet emed to move like lightning; the swallows did not y so fast or turn so quickly. Fairyfoot did his best, or he never gave in easily, but at length, his breath nd strength being spent, the boy was glad to steal way, and sit down behind a mossy oak, where his eyes osed for very weariness. When he awoke the dance as nearly over, but two little ladies clad in green lked close beside him.

"'What a beautiful boy!' said one of them. 'He worthy to be a king's son. Only see what handsom feet he has!'

"'Yes,' said the other, with a laugh that sounde spiteful; 'they are just like the feet Princess Mayblooi had before she washed them in the Growing Wel Her father has sent far and wide throughout the who country searching for a doctor to make them sma again, but nothing in this world can do it except th water of the Fair Fountain, and none but I and th nightingales know where it is.'

"'One would not care to let the like be known,' sai the first little lady: 'there would come such crowds these great coarse creatures of mankind, nobody woul have peace for leagues round. But you will surel send word to the sweet princess!—she was so kind t our birds and butterflies, and danced so like one ourselves!'

"'Not I, indeed!' said the spiteful fairy. 'Her o skinflint of a father cut down the cedar which I love best in the whole forest, and made a chest of it to ho his money in; besides, I never liked the princess— everybody praised her so. But come, we shall be to late for the last dance.'

"When they were gone, Fairyfoot could sleep no more
ith astonishment. He did not wonder at the fairies
dmiring his feet, because their own were much the
ame; but it amazed him that Princess Maybloom's
ather should be troubled at hers growing large. More-
ver, he wished to see that same princess and her
ountry, since there were really other places in the
orld than Stumpinghame.

"When Robin Goodfellow came to take him home
s usual he durst not let him know that he had over-
eard anything; but never was the boy so unwilling to
et up as on that morning, and all day he was so weary
hat in the afternoon Fairyfoot fell asleep, with his
ead on a clump of rushes. It was seldom that any one
hought of looking after him and the sickly sheep; but
so happened that towards evening the old shepherd,
leecefold, thought he would see how things went on
the pastures. The shepherd had a bad temper and
thick staff, and no sooner did he catch sight of Fairy-
ot sleeping, and his flock straying away, than shout-
ng all the ill names he could remember, in a voice
hich woke up the boy, he ran after him as fast as his
reat feet would allow; while Fairyfoot, seeing no
ther shelter from his fury, fled into the forest, and

never stopped nor stayed till he reached the banks c
a little stream.

"Thinking it might lead him to the fairies' dancing
ground, he followed that stream for many an hour, bu
it wound away into the heart of the forest, flowin
through dells, falling over mossy rocks and at last lea
ing Fairyfoot, when he was tired and the night ha
fallen, to a grove of great rose-trees, with the moo
shining on it as bright as day, and thousands of night
ingales singing in the branches. In the midst of tha
grove was a clear spring, bordered with banks of lilie
and Fairyfoot sat down by it to rest himself and listen
The singing was so sweet he could have listened fo
ever, but as he sat the nightingales left off their song
and began to talk together in the silence of the night—

" 'What boy is that,' said one on a branch above him
'who sits so lonely by the Fair Fountain? He cannc
have come from Stumpinghame with such small an
handsome feet.'

" 'No, I'll warrant you,' said another, 'he has com
from the west country. How in the world did he fin
the way?'

" 'How simple you are!' said a third nightingal
'What had he to do but follow the ground-ivy whic

rows over height and hollow, bank and bush, from the owest gate of the king's kitchen-garden to the root of his rose-tree? He looks a wise boy, and I hope he will eep the secret, or we shall have all the west country ere, dabbling in our fountain, and leaving us no rest o either talk or sing.'

"Fairyfoot sat in great astonishment at this discourse, but by and by, when the talk ceased and the ongs began, he thought it might be as well for him to ollow the ground-ivy, and see the Princess Maybloom, ot to speak of getting rid of Rough Ruddy, the sickly heep, and the crusty old shepherd. It was a long journey; but he went on, eating wild berries by day, sleeping in the hollows of old trees by night, and never losing ight of the ground-ivy, which led him over height and ollow, bank and bush, out of the forest, and along a oble high road, with fields and villages on every side, o a great city, and a low old-fashioned gate of the ing's kitchen-garden, which was thought too mean or the scullions, and had not been opened for seven ears.

"There was no use knocking—the gate was overrown with tall weeds and moss; so, being an active oy, he climbed over, and walked through the garden,

till a white fawn came frisking by, and he heard a soft voice saying sorrowfully—

"'Come back, come back, my fawn! I cannot run and play with you now, my feet have grown so heavy;' and looking round he saw the loveliest young princess in the world, dressed in snow-white, and wearing a wreath of roses on her golden hair; but walking slowly as the great people did in Stumpinghame, for her feet were as large as the best of them.

"After her came six young ladies, dressed in white and walking slowly, for they could not go before the princess; but Fairyfoot was amazed to see that their feet were as small as his own. At once he guessed that this must be the Princess Maybloom, and made her a humble bow, saying—

"'Royal princess, I have heard of your trouble because your feet have grown large: in my country that's all the fashion. For seven years past I have been wondering what would make mine grow, to no purpose; but I know of a certain fountain that will make your smaller and finer than ever they were, if the king, your father, gives you leave to come with me, accompanied by two of your maids that are the least given to talking, and the most prudent officer in all his household.

or it would grievously offend the fairies and the nightngales to make that fountain known.'

"When the princess heard that, she danced for joy n spite of her large feet, and she and her six maids rought Fairyfoot before the king and queen, where ney sat in their palace-hall, with all the courtiers payng their morning compliments. The lords were very uch astonished to see a ragged, barefooted boy rought in among them, and the ladies thought Prinss Maybloom must have gone mad; but Fairyfoot, aking an humble reverence, told his message to the ing and queen, and offered to set out with the princess at very day. At first the king would not believe that ere could be any use in his offer, because so many reat physicians had failed to give any relief. The(ourtiers laughed Fairyfoot to scorn, the pages wanted turn him out for an impudent impostor, and the rime-minister said he ought to be put to death for igh-treason.

"Fairyfoot wished himself safe in the forest again, or ven keeping the sickly sheep; but the queen, being a rudent woman, said—

" 'I pray your majesty to notice what fine feet this

boy has. There may be some truth in his story. Fo the sake of our only daughter, I will choose two maid who talk the least of all our train, and my chamberlain who is the most discreet officer in our household. Le them go with the princess: who knows but our sorro may be lessened?'

"After some persuasion the king consented thoug all his councillors advised the contrary. So the tw silent maids, the discreet chamberlain, and her fawn which would not stay behind, were sent with Prince Maybloom, and they all set out after dinner. Fairy foot had hard work guiding them along the track o the ground-ivy. The maids and the chamberlain di not like the brambles and rough roots of the forest— they thought it hard to eat berries and sleep in hollo trees; but the princess went on with good courage, an at last they reached the grove of rose-trees, and th spring bordered with lilies.

"The chamberlain washed—and though his hair ha been grey, and his face wrinkled, the young courtie envied his beauty for years after. The maids washed— and from that day they were esteemed the fairest in a the palace. Lastly, the princess washed also—it coul make her no fairer, but the moment her feet touche

ne water they grew less, and when she had washed and ried them three times, they were as small and finely-naped as Fairyfoot's own. There was great joy among nem, but the boy said sorrowfully—

" 'Oh! if there had been a well in the world to make ny feet large, my father and mother would not have ast me off, nor sent me to live among the shepherds.'

" 'Cheer up your heart,' said the Princess May-loom; 'if you want large feet, there is a well in this orest that will do it. Last summer time, I came with ny father and his foresters to see a great cedar cut own, of which he meant to make a money chest. While they were busy with the cedar, I saw a bramble ranch covered with berries. Some were ripe and some ere green, but it was the longest bramble that ever rew; for the sake of the berries, I went on and on to s root, which grew hard by a muddy-looking well, ith banks of dark green moss, in the deepest part of he forest. The day was warm and dry, and my feet ere sore with the rough ground, so I took off my carlet shoes, and washed my feet in the well; but as I ashed they grew larger every minute, and nothing ould ever make them less again. I have seen the ramble this day; it is not far off, and as you have

shown me the Fair Fountain, I will show you th
Growing Well.'

"Up rose Fairyfoot and Princess Maybloom, an
went together till they found the bramble, and came t
where its root grew, hard by the muddy-looking well
with banks of dark green moss in the deepest dell of th
forest. Fairyfoot sat down to wash, but at that min
ute he heard a sound of music, and knew it was th
fairies going to their dancing ground.

" 'If my feet grow large,' said the boy to himself
'how shall I dance with them?' So, rising quickly, h
took the Princess Maybloom by the hand. The fawn
followed them; the maids and the chamberlain fol
lowed it, and all followed the music through the forest
At last they came to the flowery green. Robin Good
fellow welcomed the company for Fairyfoot's sake, an
gave every one a drink of the fairies' wine. So they
danced there from sunset till the grey morning, an
nobody was tired; but before the lark sang, Robin
Goodfellow took them all safe home, as he used to tak
Fairyfoot.

"There was great joy that day in the palace becaus
Princess Maybloom's feet were made small again. Th
king gave Fairyfoot all manner of fine clothes and rich

wels; and when they heard his wonderful story, he
hd the queen asked him to live with them and be their
on. In process of time Fairyfoot and Princess May-
doom were married, and still live happily. When they
o to visit at Stumpinghame, they always wash their
et in the Growing Well, lest the royal family might
nink them a disgrace, but when they come back, they
lake haste to the Fair Fountain; and the fairies and
ne nightingales are great friends to them, as well as
ne maids and the chamberlain, because they have told
obody about it, and there is peace and quiet yet in
he grove of rose-trees."

Here the voice out of the cushion ceased, and two
hat wore crowns of gold, and were clothed in cloth of
lver, rose up, and said—

"That's our story."

"Mamma," said Princess Greedalind, "if we could
nd out that Fair Fountain, and keep it all to our-
elves!"

"Yes, my daughter, and the Growing Well to wash
ur money in," replied Queen Wantall; but King Win-
ealth said—

"Excepting yesterday's tale, and the two that went

before it, I have not heard such a story since m brother Wisewit went from me, and was lost in th forest. Silverspurs, the fourth of my pages, go an bring this maiden a pearl necklace."

Snowflower received the necklace accordingly, gav her thanks, made her courtesy, and went down on he grandmother's chair to the servants' hall. That nigh they gave her a down pillow, and next day she dine on a roast chicken. The feasting within and the clam ours without went on as the days before: King Wir wealth fell into his accustomed low spirits after suppe and sent down a message for Snowflower, which wa told her by the master-cook. So the little girl went u in her grandmother's chair, with red shoes, the clocke hose, the white satin gown, and the pearl necklace or All the company welcomed her with joyful looks, an no sooner had she made her courtesy, and laid dow her head, saying—"Chair of my grandmother, tell m a story," than the clear voice from under the cushio said—

"Listen to the story of Childe Charity."

CHAPTER VI

THE STORY OF CHILDE CHARITY

ONCE upon a time there lived in the west country a little girl who had neither father nor mother; they both died when she was very oung, and left their daughter to the care of her uncle, ho was the richest farmer in all that country. He had ouses and lands, flocks and herds, many servants to ork about his house and fields, a wife who had rought him a great dowry, and two fair daughters. ll their neighbours. being poor, looked up to the fam-y—insomuch that they imagined themselves great

people. The father and mother were as proud as pea cocks; the daughters thought themselves the greate beauties in the world, and not one of the family woul speak civilly to anybody they thought low.

"Now it happened that though she was their nea relation, they had this opinion of the orphan girl, partl because she had no fortune, and partly because of he humble, kindly disposition. It was said that the mor needy and despised any creature was, the more read was she to befriend it: on which account the people o the west country called her Childe Charity, and if sh had any other name, I never heard it. Childe Charit was thought very mean in that proud house. Her unc would not own her for his niece; her cousins would no keep her company; and her aunt sent her to work i the dairy, and to sleep in the back garret, where the kept all sorts of lumber and dry herbs for the winte All the servants learned the same tune, and Child Charity had more work than rest among them. All th day she scoured pails, scrubbed dishes, and washe crockeryware; but every night she slept in the bac garret as sound as a princess could in her palac chamber.

"Her uncle's house was large and white, and stoo

mong green meadows by a river's side. In front it had porch covered with a vine; behind, it had a farmyard nd high granaries. Within, there were two parlours r the rich, and two kitchens for the poor, which the eighbours thought wonderfully grand; and one day the harvest season, when this rich farmer's corn had een all cut down and housed, he condescended so far s to invite them to a harvest supper. The west coun- y people came in their holiday clothes and best be- aviour. Such heaps of cakes and cheese, such baskets f apples and barrels of ale, had never been at feast efore; and they were making merry in kitchen and arlour, when a poor old woman came to the back door, egging for broken victuals and a night's lodging. Her lothes were coarse and ragged; her hair was scanty nd grey; her back was bent; her teeth were gone. She ad a squinting eye, a clubbed foot, and crooked ngers. In short, she was the poorest and ugliest old oman that ever came begging. The first who saw er was the kitchen-maid, and she ordered her to be one for an ugly witch. The next was the herd-boy, nd he threw her a bone over his shoulder; but Childe harity, hearing the noise, came out from her seat at he foot of the lowest table, and asked the old woman

to take her share of the supper, and sleep that night i her bed in the back garret. The old woman sat dow without a word of thanks. All the company laughed a Childe Charity for giving her bed and her supper to beggar. Her proud cousins said it was just like he mean spirit, but Childe Charity did not mind them She scraped the pots for her supper that night an slept on a sack among the lumber, while the old woma rested in her warm bed; and next morning, before th little girl awoke, she was up and gone, without so muc as saying thank you, or good morning.

"That day all the servants were sick after the feas and mostly cross too—so you may judge how civil the were, when, at supper time, who should come to th back door but the old woman, again asking for broke victuals and a night's lodging. No one would listen t her or give her a morsel, till Childe Charity rose fro her seat at the foot of the lowest table, and kindl asked her to take her supper, and sleep in her bed i the back garret. Again the old woman sat down with out a word. Childe Charity scraped the pots for he supper, and slept on the sack. In the morning the ol woman was gone; but for six nights after, as sure a

e supper was spread, there was she at the back door, d the little girl regularly asked her in.

"Childe Charity's aunt said she would let her get ough of beggars. Her cousins made continual game what they called her genteel visitor. Sometimes e old woman said, 'Child, why don't you make this d softer? and why are your blankets so thin?' but e never gave her a word of thanks nor a civil good orning. At last, on the ninth night from her first ming, when Childe Charity was getting used to raping the pots and sleeping on the sack, her accus- med knock came to the door, and there she stood with ugly ash-coloured dog, so stupid-looking and clumsy at no herd-boy would keep him.

" 'Good evening, my little girl,' she said when Childe harity opened the door. 'I will not have your supper nd bed to-night—I am going on a long journey to see friend; but here is a dog of mine, whom nobody in l the west country will keep for me. He is a little oss, and not very handsome; but I leave him to your re till the shortest day in all the year. Then you and will count for his keeping.'

"When the old woman had said the last word, she t off with such speed that Childe Charity lost sight

of her in a minute. The ugly dog began to fawn upc
her, but he snarled at everybody else. The servan
said he was a disgrace to the house. The proud cousin
wanted him drowned, and it was with great troub
that Childe Charity got leave to keep him in an o
ruined cow-house. Ugly and cross as the dog was, h
fawned on her, and the old woman had left him to he
care. So the little girl gave him part of all her meal
and when the hard frost came, took him privately t
her own back garret, because the cow-house was dam
and cold in the long nights. The dog lay quietly o
some straw in a corner. Childe Charity slept soundly
but every morning the servants would say to her—

" 'What great light and fine talking was that in you
back garret?'

" 'There was no light but the moon shining i
through the shutterless window, and no talk that
heard,' said Childe Charity, and she thought they mu
have been dreaming; but night after night, when an
of them awoke in the dark and silent hour that come
before the morning, they saw a light brighter an
clearer than the Christmas fire, and heard voices lik
those of lords and ladies in the back garret.

"Partly from fear, and partly from laziness, none o

e servants would rise to see what might be there; till length, when the winter nights were at the longest, e little parlour-maid, who did least work and got ost favour, because she gathered news for her mis-ess, crept out of bed when all the rest were sleeping, d set herself to watch at a crevice of the door. She w the dog lying quietly in the corner, Childe Charity eeping soundly in her bed, and the moon shining rough the shutterless window; but an hour before ybreak there came a glare of lights, and a sound of r-off bugles. The window opened, and in marched a oop of little men clothed in crimson and gold, and aring every man a torch, till the room looked bright day. They marched up with great reverence to the g, where he lay on the straw, and the most richly thed among them said—

" 'Royal prince, we have prepared the banquet hall. hat will your highness please that we do next?'

" 'Ye have done well,' said the dog. 'Now prepare e feast, and see that all things be in our first fashion: r the princess and I mean to bring a stranger who ver feasted in our halls before.'

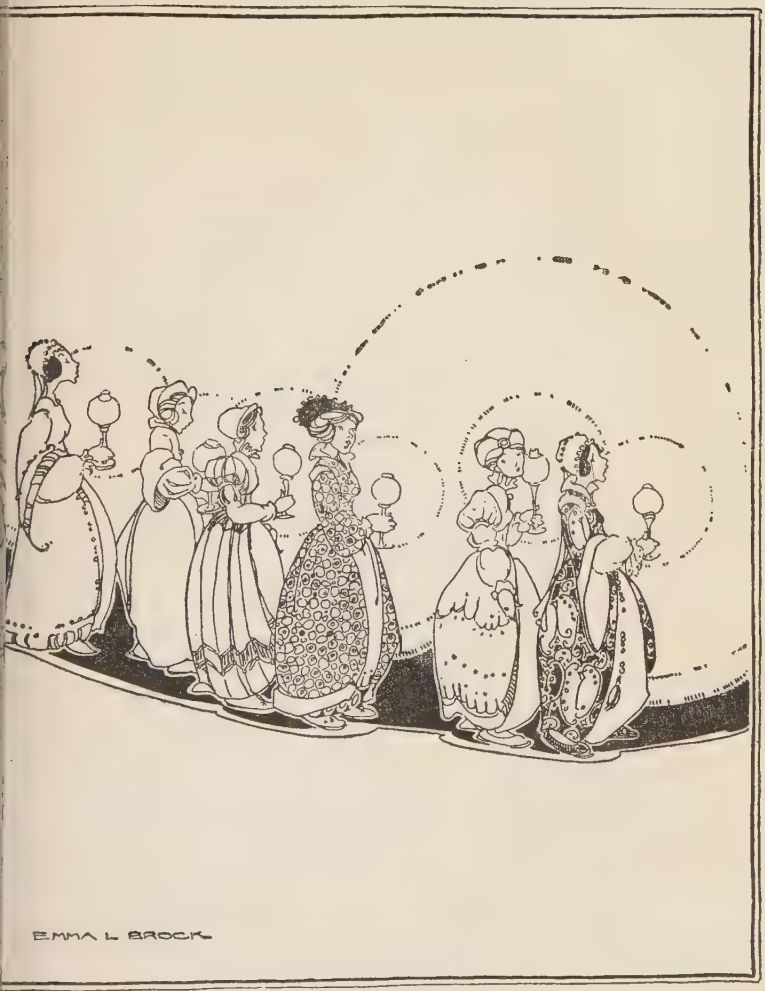
" 'Your highness's commands shall be obeyed,' said e little man, making another reverence; and he and

his company passed out of the window. By and by there was another glare of lights, and a sound like faint off flutes. The window opened, and there came in company of little ladies clad in rose-coloured velvet and carrying each a crystal lamp. They also walked with great reverence up to the dog, and the gayest among them said—

"'Royal prince, we have prepared the tapestry. What will your highness please that we do next?'

"'Ye have done well,' said the dog. 'Now prepare the robes, and let all things be in our first fashion: for the princess and I will bring with us a stranger who never feasted in our halls before.'

"'Your highness's commands shall be obeyed,' said the little lady, making a low courtesy; and she and her company passed out through the window, which closed quietly behind them. The dog stretched himself out upon the straw, the little girl turned in her sleep, and the moon shone in on the back garret. The parlour maid was so much amazed, and so eager to tell this great story to her mistress, that she could not close her eyes that night, and was up before cock-crow; but when she told it, her mistress called her a silly wench to have such foolish dreams, and scolded her so that



CARRYING EACH A CRYSTAL LAMP.

e parlour-maid durst not mention what she had seen
the servants. Nevertheless Childe Charity's aunt
ought there might be something in it worth knowing;
next night, when all the house were asleep, she crept
it of bed, and set herself to watch at the back garret
oor. There she saw exactly what the maid told her—
ie little men with the torches, and the little ladies
ith the crystal lamps, come in making great reverence
the dog, and the same words pass, only he said to the
ne, 'Now prepare the presents,' and to the other, 'Pre-
are the jewels;' and when they were gone the dog
retched himself on the straw, Childe Charity turned
her sleep, and the moon shone in on the back garret.

"The mistress could not close her eyes any more than
ie maid from eagerness to tell the story. She woke
p Childe Charity's rich uncle before cock-crow; but
hen he heard it, he laughed at her for a foolish
oman, and advised her not to repeat the like before
ie neighbours, lest they should think she had lost her
enses. The mistress could say no more, and the day
assed; but that night the master thought he would
ke to see what went on in the back garret: so when
ll the house were asleep he slipped out of bed, and set
imself to watch at the crevice in the door. The same

thing happened again that the maid and the mistres saw: the little men in crimson with their torches, an the little ladies in rose-coloured velvet with thei lamps, came in at the window, and made an humb reverence to the ugly dog, the one saying, 'Roy prince, we have prepared the presents,' and the othe 'Royal prince, we have prepared the jewels;' and th dog said to them all, 'Ye have done well. To-morro come and meet me and the princess with horses an chariots, and let all things be in our first fashion: fo we will bring a stranger from this house who has neve travelled with us, nor feasted in our halls before.'

"The little men and the little ladies said, 'Your high ness's commands shall be obeyed.' When they ha gone out through the window the ugly dog stretche himself out on the straw, Childe Charity turned in he sleep, and the moon shone in on the back garret.

"The master could not close his eyes any more tha the maid or the mistress, for thinking of this strang sight. He remembered to have heard his grandfathe say, that somewhere near his meadows there lay a pat leading to the fairies' country, and the haymaker used to see it shining through the grey summer morn ing as the fairy bands went home. Nobody had hear

r seen the like for many years; but the master concluded that the doings in his back garret must be a airy business, and the ugly dog a person of great acount. His chief wonder was, however, what visitor he fairies intended to take from his house; and after inking the matter over he was sure it must be one f his daughters—they were so handsome, and had such ne clothes.

"Accordingly, Childe Charity's rich uncle made it his rst business that morning to get ready a breakfast of ast mutton for the ugly dog, and carry it to him in ie old cow-house; but not a morsel would the dog aste. On the contrary, he snarled at the master, and ould have bitten him if he had not run away with is mutton.

" 'The fairies have strange ways,' said the master to imself; but he called his daughters privately, bidding em dress themselves in their best, for he could not y which of them might be called into great company efore nightfall. Childe Charity's proud cousins, hearg this, put on the richest of their silks and laces, and rutted like peacocks from kitchen to parlour all day, aiting for the call their father spoke of, while the ttle girl scoured and scrubbed in the dairy. They

were in very bad humour when night fell, and nobod had come; but just as the family were sitting down t supper the ugly dog began to bark, and the old woman knock was heard at the back door. Childe Charit opened it, and was going to offer her bed and suppo as usual, when the old woman said—

" 'This is the shortest day in all the year, and I a going home to hold a feast after my travels. I see yo have taken good care of my dog, and now if you wi come with me to my house, he and I will do our be to entertain you. Here is our company.'

"As the old woman spoke there was a sound of fa off flutes and bugles, then a glare of lights; and a gre company, clad so grandly that they shone with go and jewels, came in open chariots, covered with gildi and drawn by snow-white horses. The first and fine of the chariots was empty. The old woman led Child Charity to it by the hand, and the ugly dog jumped before her. The proud cousins, in all their finery, h by this time come to the door, but nobody want them; and no sooner was the old woman and her d within the chariot than a marvellous change pass over them, for the ugly old woman turned at once a beautiful young princess, with long yellow curls a

THE FAIRY CHARIOT

robe of green and gold, while the ugly dog at her side tarted up a fair prince, with nut-brown hair and a robe f purple and silver.

" 'We are,' said they, as the chariots drove on, and he little girl sat astonished, 'a prince and princess of 'airyland, and there was a wager between us whether r not there were good people still to be found in these alse and greedy times. One said Yes, and the other aid No; and I have lost,' said the prince, 'and must ay the feast and presents.'

"Childe Charity never heard any more of that story. ome of the farmer's household, who were looking after hem through the moonlight night, said the chariots ad gone one way across the meadows, some said they ad gone another, and till this day they cannot agree pon the direction. But Childe Charity went with that oble company into a country such as she had never een—for primroses covered all the ground, and the ght was always like that of a summer evening. They ook her to a royal palace, where there was nothing but easting and dancing for seven days. She had robes of ale green velvet to wear, and slept in a chamber inlaid ith ivory. When the feast was done, the prince and rincess gave her such heaps of gold and jewels that

she could not carry them, but they gave her a chario to go home in, drawn by six white horses; and on th seventh night, which happened to be Christmas time when the farmer's family had settled in their ow minds that she would never come back, and were sit ting down to supper, they heard the sound of her coach man's bugle, and saw her alight with all the jewels an gold at the very back door where she had brought i the ugly old woman. The fairy chariot drove away, an never came back to that farmhouse after. But Child Charity scrubbed and scoured no more, for she grew great lady, even in the eyes of her proud cousins."

Here the voice out of the cushion ceased, and one with a fair face and a robe of pale green velvet, ros from among the company, and said—

"That's my story."

"Mamma," said Princess Greedalind, "if we ha some of those fine chariots!"

"Yes, my daughter," answered Queen Wantall, "an the gold and jewels too!" But King Winwealth said—

"Excepting yesterday's story, and the three tha went before it, I have not heard such a tale since m brother Wisewit went from me, and was lost in the for

st. Highjinks, the third of my pages, go and bring his maiden a crimson velvet hat."

Snowflower took the hat and thanked the king, made her courtesy, and went down on her grandmother's chair to the housekeeper's parlour. Her blanket was covered with a patchwork quilt that night; next day she had roast turkey and meat for dinner. But the feast went on in the palace hall with the usual spites and envies; the clamours and complaints at the gate were still heard above all the music; and King Winwealth fell into his wonted low spirits as soon as the supper was over. As usual, a message came down from the banquet hall, and the chief-butler told Snowflower that she and her chair were wanted to tell King Winwealth a story. So she went up with all the presents on, even to the crimson hat, made her courtesy to the good company, and had scarcely said—"Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story," when the voice from under the cushion said—

"Listen to the story of Sour and Civil."

CHAPTER VII

SOUR AND CIVIL

"ONCE upon a time there stood upon the sea-coast of the west country a certain hamlet of low cottages, where no one lived but fishermen. All round it was a broad beach of snow-white sand, where nothing was to be seen but gulls and cormorants, and long tangled seaweeds cast up by the tide that came and went night and day, summer and winter. There was no harbour nor port on all that shore. Ships passed by at a distance, with their white sails set, and on the landside there lay wide grassy downs, where

peasants lived and shepherds fed their flocks. The fishermen thought themselves as well off as any people in that country. Their families never wanted for plenty of herrings and mackerel; and what they had to spare the landsmen bought from them at certain village markets on the downs, giving them in exchange butter, cheese, and corn.

"The two best fishermen in that village were the sons of two old widows, who had no other children, and happened to be near neighbours. Their family names were short, for they called the one Sour, and the other Civil. There was no relationship between them that ever I heard of; but they had only one boat, and always fished together, though their names expressed the difference of their humours—for Civil never used a hard word where a soft one would do, and when Sour was not snarling at somebody, he was sure to be grumbling at everything.

"Nevertheless they agreed wonderfully, and were lucky fishers. Both were strong, active, and of good courage. On winter's night or summer's morning they would steer out to sea far beyond the boats of their neighbours, and never came home without some fish to cook and some to spare. Their mothers were proud of

them each in her own fashion—for the saying held good, 'Like mother, like son.' Dame Civil thought the whole world didn't hold a better than her son; and her boy was the only creature at whom Dame Sour didn't scold and frown. The hamlet was divided in opinion concerning the young fishermen. Some thought Civil the best; some said, without Sour he would catch nothing. So things went on, till one day about the fall of winter, when mists were gathering darkly on sea and sky, and the air was chill and frosty, all the boatmen of the hamlet went out to fish, and so did Sour and Civil.

"That day they had not their usual luck. Cast their net where they would, not a single fish came in. Their neighbours caught boatsful, and went home, Sour said laughing at them. But when the sea was growing crimson with the sunset their nets were empty, and they were tired. Civil himself did not like to go home without fish—it would damage the high repute they had gained in the village. Besides, the sea was calm and the evening fair, and, as a last attempt, they steered still farther out, and cast their nets beside a rock which rose rough and grey above the water, and was called the Merman's Seat—from an old report that the fishermen's fathers had seen the mermen, or sea

people, sitting there on moonlight nights. Nobody believed that rumour now, but the villagers did not like to fish there. The water was said to be deep beyond measure, and sudden squalls were apt to trouble it; but Sour and Civil were right glad to see by the moving of their lines that there was something in their net, and gladder still when they found it so heavy that all their strength was required to draw it up. Scarcely had they landed it on the Merman's Seat, when their joy was changed to disappointment, for besides a few starved mackerel, the net contained nothing but a monstrous ugly fish as long as Civil (who was taller than Sour), with a huge snout, a long beard, and a skin covered with prickles.

"'Such a horrid ugly creature!' said Sour, as they shook it out of the net on the rough rock, and gathered up the mackerel. 'We needn't fish here any more. How they will mock us in the village for staying out so late, and bringing home so little!'

"'Let us try again,' said Civil, as he set his creel of mackerel in the boat.

"'Not another cast will I make to-night;' and what more Sour would have said, was cut short by the great fish, for, looking round at them, it spoke out—

" 'I suppose you don't think me worth taking home in your dirty boat; but I can tell you that if you were down in my country, neither of you would be thought fit to keep me company.'

"Sour and Civil were terribly astonished to hear the fish speak. The first could not think of a cross word to say, but Civil made answer in his accustomed manner.

" 'Indeed, my lord, we beg your pardon, but our boat is too light to carry such a fish as you.'

" 'You do well to call me lord,' said the fish, 'for so I am, though it was hard to expect you could have known my quality in this dress. However, help me off the rock, for I must go home; and for your civility I will give you my daughter in marriage, if you will come and see me this day twelvemonth.'

"Civil helped the great fish off the rock as respectfully as his fear would allow him. Sour was so terrified at the whole transaction, that he said not a word till they got safe home; but from that day forward, when he wanted to put Civil down, it was his custom to tell him and his mother that he would get no wife but the ugly fish's daughter.

"Old Dame Sour heard this story from her son, and told it over the whole village. Some people wondered,

but the most part laughed at it as a good joke; and Civil and his mother were never known to be angry but on that occasion. Dame Civil advised her son never to fish with Sour again; and as the boat happened to be his, Civil got an old skiff which one of the fishermen was going to break up for firewood, and cobbled it up for himself.

"In that skiff he went to sea alone all the winter, and all the summer; but though Civil was brave and skilful, he could catch little, because his boat was bad—and everybody but his mother began to think him of no value. Sour having the good boat got a new comrade, and had the praise of being the best fisherman.

"Poor Civil's heart was getting low as the summer wore away. The fish had grown scarce on that coast, and the fishermen had to steer farther out to sea. One evening when he had toiled all day and caught nothing, Civil thought he would go farther too, and try his fortune beside the Merman's Seat. The sea was calm, and the evening fair; Civil did not remember that it was the very day on which his troubles began by the great fish talking to him twelve months before. As he neared the rock the sun was setting, and much astonished was the fisherman to see upon it three fair ladies.

with sea-green gowns and strings of great pearls wound round their long fair hair; two of them were waving their hands to him. They were the tallest and stateliest ladies he had ever seen; but Civil could perceive as he came nearer that there was no colour in their cheeks, that their hair had a strange bluish shade, like that of deep sea-water, and there was a fiery light in their eyes that frightened him. The third, who was less of stature, did not notice him at all, but kept her eyes fixed on the setting sun. Though her look was mournful, Civil could see that there was a faint rosy bloom on her cheek—that her hair was a golden yellow, and her eyes were mild and clear like those of his mother.

"'Welcome! welcome! noble fisherman!' cried the two ladies. 'Our father has sent us for you to visit him,' and with one bound they leaped into his boat, bringing with them the smaller lady, who said—

"'Oh! bright sun and brave sky that I see so seldom!' But Civil heard no more, for his boat went down miles deep in the sea, and he thought himself drowning; but one lady had caught him by the right arm, and the other by the left, and pulled him into the mouth of a rocky cave, where there was no water. On

They went, still down and down, as if on a steep hillside. The cave was very long, but it grew wider as they came to the bottom. Then Civil saw a faint light, and walked out with his fair company into the country of the sea-people. In that land there grew neither grass nor flowers, bushes nor trees, but the ground was covered with bright-coloured shells and pebbles. There were hills of marble, and rocks of spar; and over all a cold blue sky with no sun, but a light clear and silvery as that of the harvest moon. The fisherman could see no smoking chimneys, but there were grottoes in the sparry rocks, and halls in the marble hills, where lived the sea-people—with whom, as old stories say, fishermen and mariners used to meet on lonely capes and headlands in the simple times of the world.

"Forth they came in all directions to see the stranger. Mermen with long white beards, and mermaids such as walk with the fishermen, all clad in sea-green, and decorated with strings of pearls; but every one with the same colourless face, and the same wild light in their eyes. The mermaids led Civil up one of the marble hills to a great cavern with halls and chambers like a palace. Their floors were of alabaster, their walls of porphyry, and their ceilings inlaid with coral.

Thousands of crystal lamps lit the palace. There were seats and tables hewn out of shining spar, and a great company sat feasting; but what most amazed Civil was the quantity of cups, flagons, and goblets, made of gold and silver, of such different shapes and patterns that they seemed to have been gathered from all the countries in the world. In the chief hall there sat a merman on a stately chair, with more jewels than all the rest about him. Before him the mermaids brought Civil, saying—

" 'Father, here is our guest.'

" 'Welcome, noble fisherman!' cried the merman, in a voice which Civil remembered with terror, for it was that of the great ugly fish; 'welcome to our halls! Sit down and feast with us, and then choose which of my daughters you will have for a bride.'

"Civil had never felt himself so thoroughly frightened in all his life. How was he to get home to his mother? and what would the old dame think when the dark night came without bringing him home? There was no use in talking—Civil had wisdom enough to see that: he therefore tried to take things quietly; and, having thanked the merman for his invitation, took the seat assigned him on his right hand. Civil was

ungry with the long day at sea, but there was no want f fare on that table: meats and wines, such as he had ever tasted, were set before him in the richest of olden dishes; but hungry as he was, the fisherman erceived that everything there had the taste and smell f the sea.

"If the fisherman had been the lord of lands and astles he would not have been treated with more re-pect. The two mermaids sat by him—one filled his late, another filled his goblet; but the third only oked at him in a stealthy, warning way when nobody erceived her. Civil soon finished his share of the east, and then the merman showed him all the splen-ours of his cavern. The halls were full of company, me feasting, some dancing, and some playing all anner of games, and in every hall was the same undance of gold and silver vessels; but Civil was ost astonished when the merman brought him to a arble chamber full of heaps of precious stones. There ere diamonds there whose value the fisherman knew ot—pearls larger than ever a diver had gathered—meralds, sapphires, and rubies, that would have made he jewellers of the world wonder; the merman then id—

" 'This is my eldest daughter's dowry.'

" 'Good luck attend her!' said Civil. 'It is the dowr of a queen.' But the merman led him on to anothe chamber: it was filled with heaps of gold coin, whic seemed gathered from all times and nations. Th images and inscriptions of all the kings that eve reigned were there; and the merman said—

" 'This is my second daughter's dowry.'

" 'Good luck attend her!' said Civil. 'It is a dowr for a princess.'

" 'So you may say,' replied the merman. 'But mak up your mind which of the maidens you will marr for the third has no portion at all, because she is not m daughter; but only, as you may see, a poor silly gi taken into my family for charity.'

" 'Truly, my lord,' said Civil, whose mind was a ready made up, 'both your daughters are too ric and far too noble for me; therefore I choose the thir Her poverty will best become my estate of a poo fisherman.'

" 'If you choose her,' said the merman, 'you mus wait long for a wedding. I cannot allow an inferic girl to be married before my own daughters.' And h

id a great deal more to persuade him; but Civil would
t change his mind, and they returned to the hall.

"There was no more attention for the fisherman, but
erybody watched him well. Turn where he would,
aster or guest had their eyes upon him, though he
ade them the best speeches he could remember, and
aised all their splendours. One thing, however, was
range—there was no end to the fun and feasting;
body seemed tired, and nobody thought of sleep.
hen Civil's very eyes closed with weariness, and he
ept on one of the marble benches—no matter how
any hours—there were the company feasting and
ncing away; there were the thousand lamps within,
d the cold moonlight without. Civil wished himself
ck with his mother, his net, and his cobbled skiff.
shing would have been easier than those everlasting
asts; but there was nothing else among the sea-
eople—no night of rest, no working day.

"Civil knew not how time went on, till, waking up
om a long sleep, he saw, for the first time, that the
ast was over, and the company gone. The lamps
ill burned, and the tables, with all their riches, stood
the empty halls; but there was no face to be seen,
sound to be heard, only a low voice singing beside

the outer door; and there, sitting all alone, he found the mild-eyed maiden.

"'Fair lady,' said Civil, 'tell me what means this quietness, and where are all the merry company?'

"'You are a man of the land,' said the lady, 'and know not the sea-people. They never sleep but once a year, and that is at Christmas time. Then they go into the deep caverns, where there is always darkness and sleep till the new year comes.'

"'It is a strange fashion,' said Civil; 'but all folk have their way. Fair lady, as you and I are to be good friends, tell me, whence come all the wines and meats and gold and silver vessels, seeing there are neither cornfields nor flocks here, workmen nor artificers?'

"'The sea-people are heirs of the sea,' replied the maiden; 'to them come all the stores and riches that are lost in it. I know not the ways by which they come; but the lord of these halls keeps the keys of seven gates, where they go out and in; but one of the gates, which has not been open for thrice seven years, leads to a path under the sea, by which, I heard the merman say in his cups, one might reach the land. Good fisherman, if by chance you gain his favour, and ever open that gate, let me bear you company; for

as born where the sun shines and the grass grows, ough my country and my parents are unknown to e. All I remember is sailing in a great ship, when a orm arose, and it was wrecked, and not one soul es- ped drowning but me. I was then a little child, and brave sailor had bound me to a floating plank before e was washed away. Here the sea-people came round e like great fishes, and I went down with them to this ch and weary country. Sometimes, as a great favour, ey take me up with them to see the sun; but that is ldom, for they never like to part with one who has en their country; and, fisherman, if you ever leave em, remember to take nothing with you that belongs them, for if it were but a shell or a pebble, that will ve them power over you and yours.'

" 'Thanks for your news, fair lady,' said Civil. 'A rd's daughter, doubtless, you must have been, while am but a poor fisherman; yet, as we have fallen into e same misfortune, let us be friends, and it may be e shall find means to get back to the sunshine gether.'

" 'You are a man of good manners,' said the lady, herefore, I accept your friendship; but my fear is at we shall never see the sunshine again.'

"'Fair speeches brought me here,' said Civil, 'an fair speeches may help me back; but be sure I will nc go without you.'

"This promise cheered the lady's heart, and she an Civil spent that Christmas time seeing the wonders c the sea country. They wandered through caves lik that of the great merman. The unfinished feast wa spread in every hall; the tables were covered with mo costly vessels; and heaps of jewels lay on the floors c unlocked chambers. But for the lady's warning, Civ would fain have put away some of them for his mothe

"The poor woman was sad of heart by this tim believing her son to be drowned. On the first nigh when he did not come home, she had gone down to th sea and watched till morning. Then the fisherme steered out again, and Sour having found his ski floating about, brought it home, saying the foolis young man was doubtless lost; but what better coul be expected when he had no discreet person to tak care of him?

"This grieved Dame Civil sore. She never expecte to see her son again; but, feeling lonely in her cottag at the evening hour when he used to come home, th good woman accustomed herself to go down at sunse

nd sit beside the sea. That winter happened to be ild on the coast of the west country, and one evening hen the Christmas time was near, and the rest of the illage preparing to make merry, Dame Civil sat, as sual, on the sands. The tide was ebbing and the sun oing down, when from the eastward came a lady clad black, mounted on a black palfrey, and followed by squire in the same sad clothing; as the lady came ear, she said—

" 'Woe is me for my daughter, and for all that have st by the sea!'

" 'You say well, noble lady,' said Dame Civil. 'Woe me also for my son, for I have none beside him.'

"When the lady heard that, she alighted from her alfrey, and sat down by the fisherman's mother, aying—

" 'Listen to my story. I was the widow of a great rd in the heart of the east country. He left me a fair astle, and an only daughter, who was the joy of my eart. Her name was Faith Feignless; but, while she as yet a child, a great fortune-teller told me that my aughter would marry a fisherman. I thought this ould be a great disgrace to my noble family, and, herefore, sent my daughter with her nurse in a good

ship, bound for a certain city where my relations liv intending to follow myself as soon as I could get m lands and castles sold. But the ship was wrecke and my daughter drowned; and I have wandered ov the world with my good Squire Trusty, mourning c every shore with those who have lost friends by t sea. Some with whom I have mourned grew to forg their sorrow, and would lament with me no mor others being sour and selfish, mocked me, saying m grief was nothing to them; but you have good ma ners, and I will remain with you, however humble your dwelling. My squire carries gold enough to pa all our charges.' So the mourning lady and her goo Squire Trusty went home with Dame Civil, and sh was no longer lonely in her sorrow, for when the dam said—

" 'Oh! if my son were alive, I should never let hi go to sea in a cobbled skiff!' the lady answered—

" 'Oh! if my daughter were but living, I should nev think it a disgrace though she married a fisherman!'

"The Christmas passed as it always does in the we country—shepherds made merry on the downs, an fishermen on the shore; but when the merrymaking and ringing of bells were over in all the land, the sea

people woke up to their continual feasts and dances. like one that had forgotten all that was past, the merman again showed Civil the chamber of gold and the chamber of jewels, advising him to choose between his two daughters; but the fisherman still answered that the ladies were too noble, and far too rich for him. Yet as he looked at the glittering heap, Civil could not help recollecting the poverty of the west country, and the thought slipped out—

"'How happy my old neighbours would be to find themselves here!'

"'Say you so?' said the merman, who always wanted visitors.

"'Yes,' said Civil, 'I have neighbours up yonder in the west country whom it would be hard to send home again if they got sight of half this wealth;' and the honest fisherman thought of Dame Sour and her son.

"The merman was greatly delighted with these speeches—he thought there was a probability of getting many land-people down, and by and by said to Civil—

"'Suppose you took up a few jewels, and went up to tell your poor neighbours how welcome we might make them?'

"The prospect of getting back to his country rejoiced Civil's heart, but he had promised not to go without the lady, and therefore answered prudently what was indeed true—

" 'Many thanks, my lord, for choosing such a humble man as I am to bear your message; but the people of the west country never believe anything without two witnesses at the least; yet if the poor maid whom I have chosen could be permitted to accompany me, I think they would believe us both.'

"The merman said nothing in reply, but his people who had heard Civil's speech, talked it over among themselves till they grew sure that the whole west country would come down, if they only had news of the riches, and petitioned their lord to send up Civil and the poor maid by way of letting them know.

"As it seemed for the public good, the great merman consented; but, being determined to have them back, he gathered out of his treasure chamber some of the largest pearls and diamonds that lay convenient, and said—

" 'Take these as a present from me, to let the west country people see what I can do for my visitors.'

"Civil and the lady took the presents, saying—

" 'Oh, my lord, you are too generous. We want noth-
g but the pleasure of telling of your marvellous riches
o yonder.'

" 'Tell everybody to come down, and they will get
e like,' said the merman; 'and follow my eldest
ughter, for she carries the key of the land gate.'

"Civil and the lady followed the mermaid through
winding gallery, which led from the chief banquet
ll far into the marble hill. All was dark, and they
d neither lamp nor torch, but at the end of the gal-
ry they came to a great stone gate, which creaked
e thunder on its hinges. Beyond that there was a
rrow cave, sloping up and up like a steep hill-side.
ivil and the lady thought they would never reach the
p; but at last they saw a gleam of daylight, then a
rip of blue sky, and the mermaid bade them stoop
d creep through what seemed a crevice in the ground,
d both stood up on the broad sea-beach as the day
as breaking and the tide ebbing fast away.

" 'Good times to you among your west country
eople,' said the mermaid. 'Tell any of them that
ould like to come down to visit us, that they must
me here midway between the high and low water-
ark, when the tide is going out at morning or eve-

ning. Call thrice on the sea-people, and we will sh
them the way.'

"Before they could make answer, she had sunk do
from their sight, and there was no track or passa
there, but all was covered by the loose sand and se
shells.

" 'Now,' said the lady to Civil, 'we have seen t
heavens once more, and we will not go back. Cast
the merman's present quickly before the sun rises;' a
taking the bag of pearls and diamonds, she flung it
far as she could into the sea.

"Civil never was so unwilling to part with anythi
as that bag, but he thought it better to follow a go
example, and tossed his into the sea also. Th
thought they heard a long moan come up from t
waters; but Civil saw his mother's chimney beginni
to smoke, and with the fair lady in her sea-green go
he hastened to the good dame's cottage.

The whole village was awakened that morning wi
cries of 'Welcome back, my son!' 'Welcome back, m
daughter!' for the mournful lady knew it was her lo
daughter, Faith Feignless, whom the fisherman ha
brought back, and all the neighbours assembled to he
their story. When it was told, everybody praised Civ

r the prudence he had shown in his difficulties, ex-
pt Sour and his mother: they did nothing but rail
on him for losing such great chances of making him-
lf and the whole country rich. At last, when they
ard over and over again of the merman's treasures,
ither mother nor son would consent to stay any
nger in the west country, and as nobody persuaded
em, and they would not take Civil's direction, Sour
t out his boat and steered away with his mother
wards the Merman's Seat. From that voyage they
ver came back to the hamlet. Some say they went
wn and lived among the sea-people; others say—I
ow not how they learned it—that Sour and his
other grumbled and growled so much that even the
a-people grew weary of them, and turned them and
eir boat out on the open sea. What part of the world
ey chose to land on nobody is certain: by all accounts
ey have been seen everywhere, and I should not be
rprised if they were in this good company. As for
vil, he married Faith Feignless, and became a great
rd."

Here the voice ceased, and two that were clad in sea-
een silk, with coronets of pearls. rose up, and said—

"That's our story."

"Oh, mamma, if we could get down to that country," said Princess Greedalind.

"And bring all the treasures back with us!" answered Queen Wantall.

"Except the tale of yesterday, and the four that went before it, I have not heard such a story since my brother Wisewit went from me, and was lost in the forest," said King Winwealth. "Readyrein, the second of my pages, rise, and bring this maiden a purple velvet mantle."

The mantle was brought, and Snowflower having thanked the king, went down upon her grandmother's chair; but that night the little girl went no farther than the lowest banquet hall, where she was bidden to stay and share the feast, and sleep hard by in a waiting scot chamber. That she was well entertained there is no doubt, for King Winwealth had been heard to say that it was not clear to him how he could have got through the seven days' feast without her grandmother's chair and its stories; but next day being the last of the seven, things were gayer than ever in the palace. The music had never been so merry, the dishes so rich, or the wines so rare; neither had the clamour

the gate ever been so loud, nor the disputes and vies so many in the halls.

Perhaps it was these doings that brought the low irits earlier than usual on King Winwealth, for after nner his majesty fell into them so deeply that a mes-ge came down from the highest banquet hall, and the lpbearer told Snowflower to go up with her chair, r King Winwealth wished to hear another story.

Now the little girl put on all her finery, from the arlet shoes to the purple mantle, and went up with r chair, looking so like a princess that the whole com-ny rose to welcome her. But having made her cour-sy, and laid down her head, saying—"Chair of my andmother, tell me a story," the clear voice from der the cushion answered—

"Listen to the Story of Merrymind."

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF MERRYMIND

"ONCE upon a time there lived in the nor country a certain poor man and his wife, wh had two corn-fields, three cows, five shee and thirteen children. Twelve of these children we called by names common in the north country—Har head, Stiffneck, Tightfingers, and the like; but wh the thirteenth came to be named, either the poor ma and his wife could remember no other name, or som thing in the child's look made them think it prope for they called him Merrymind, which the neighbou

hought a strange name, and very much above their tation: however, as they showed no other signs of ride, the neighbours let that pass. Their thirteen hildren grew taller and stronger every year, and they ad hard work to keep them in bread; but when the oungest was old enough to look after his father's heep, there happened the great fair, to which every- ody in the north country went, because it came only nce in seven years, and was held on midsummer-day, —not in any town or village, but on a green plain, lying etween a broad river and a high hill, where it was said ne fairies used to dance in old and merry times.

"Merchants and dealers of all sorts crowded to that air from far and near. There was nothing known in ne north country that could not be bought or sold in , and neither old nor young were willing to go home ithout a fairing. The poor man who owned this rge family could afford them little to spend in such ays; but as the fair happened only once in seven ears, he would not show a poor spirit. Therefore, call- ng them about him, he opened the leathern bag in hich his savings were stored, and gave every one of ne thirteen a silver penny.

"The boys and girls had never before owned so much

pocket-money; and, wondering what they should bu
they dressed themselves in their holiday clothes, an
set out with their father and mother to the fair. Whe
they came near the ground that midsummer mornin
the stalls, heaped up with all manner of merchandis
from gingerbread upwards, the tents for fun and feas
ing, the puppet-shows, the rope-dancers, and th
crowd of neighbours and strangers, all in their be
attire, made those simple people think their nor
country fair the finest sight in the world. The da
wore away in seeing wonders, and in chatting with o
friends. It was surprising how far silver pennies we
in those days; but before evening twelve of the thi
teen had got fairly rid of their money. One bought
pair of brass buckles, another a crimson riband, a thi
green garters; the father bought a tobacco-pipe, th
mother a horn snuffbox—in short, all had provide
themselves with fairings except Merrymind.

"The cause of the silver penny remaining in h
pocket was that he had set his heart upon a fiddle; an
fiddles enough there were in the fair—small and larg
plain and painted: he looked at and priced the most
them, but there was not one that came within the com
pass of a silver penny. His father and mother warne

im to make haste with his purchase, for they must ll go home at sunset, because the way was long.

"The sun was getting low and red upon the hill; the air was growing thin, for many dealers had packed up heir stalls and departed; but there was a mossy hol- ow in the great hill-side, to which the outskirts of the air had reached, and Merrymind thought he would ee what might be there. The first thing was a stall f fiddles, kept by a young merchant from a far coun- y, who had many customers, his goods being fine nd new; but hard by sat a little grey-haired man, at hom everybody had laughed that day, because he ad nothing on his stall but one old dingy fiddle, and ll its strings were broken. Nevertheless, the little an sat as stately, and cried, 'Fiddles to sell!' as if he ad the best stall in the fair.

" 'Buy a fiddle, my young master?' he said, as Merry- nind came forward. 'You shall have it cheap: I ask ut a silver penny for it; and if the strings were ended, its like would not be in the north country.'

"Merrymind thought this a great bargain. He was handy boy, and could mend the strings while watch- ng his father's sheep. So down went the silver penny

on the little man's stall, and up went the fiddle under Merrymind's arm.

"'Now, my young master,' said the little man, 'you see that we merchants have a deal to look after, and if you help me to bundle up my stall, I will tell you a wonderful piece of news about that fiddle.'

"Merrymind was good-natured and fond of news, so he helped him to tie up the loose boards and sticks that composed his stall with an old rope, and when they were hoisted on his back like a fagot, the little man said—

"'About that fiddle, my young master: it is certain the strings can never be mended, nor made new, except by threads from the night-spinners, which, if you get it will be a good pennyworth;' and up the hill he ran like a greyhound.

"Merrymind thought that was queer news, but being given to hope the best, he believed the little man was only jesting, and made haste to join the rest of the family, who were soon on their way home. When they got there every one showed his bargain, and Merrymind showed his fiddle; but his brothers and sisters laughed at him for buying such a thing when he had never learned to play. His sisters asked him what

music he could bring out of broken strings; and his father said—

" 'Thou hast shown little prudence in laying out thy first penny, from which token I fear thou wilt never have many to lay out.'

"In short, everybody threw scorn on Merrymind's bargain except his mother. She, good woman, said if he laid out one penny ill, he might lay out the next better; and who knew but his fiddle would be of use some day? To make her words good, Merrymind fell to repairing the strings—he spent all his time, both night and day, upon them; but, true to the little man's parting words, no mending would stand, and no string would hold on that fiddle. Merrymind tried everything, and wearied himself to no purpose. At last he thought of inquiring after people who spun at night; and this seemed such a good joke to the north country people, that they wanted no other till the next fair.

"In the meantime Merrymind lost credit at home and abroad. Everybody believed in his father's prophecy; his brothers and sisters valued him no more than a herd-boy; the neighbours thought he must turn out a scape-grace. Still the boy would not part with his fiddle. It was his silver pennyworth, and he had a

strong hope of mending the strings for all that ha
come and gone; but since nobody at home cared fo
him except his mother, and as she had twelve othe
children, he resolved to leave the scorn behind him, an
go to seek his fortune.

"The family were not very sorry to hear of tha
intention, being in a manner ashamed of him; beside
they could spare one out of thirteen. His father gav
him a barley cake, and his mother her blessing. A
his brothers and sisters wished him well. Most of th
neighbours hoped that no harm would happen to him
and Merrymind set out one summer morning with th
broken-stringed fiddle under his arm.

"There were no highways then in the north countr
—people took whatever path pleased them best; s
Merrymind went over the fair ground and up the hil
hoping to meet the little man, and learn something c
the night-spinners. The hill was covered with heathe
to the top, and he went up without meeting any on
On the other side it was steep and rocky, and after
hard scramble down, he came to a narrow glen all over
grown with wild furze and brambles. Merrymind ha
never met with briars so sharp, but he was not the bo
to turn back readily, and pressed on in spite of tor

MERRYMIND AND THE GIANT STRONGARM.

clothes and scratched hands, till he came to the end of the glen, where two paths met: one of them wound through a pine-wood, he knew not how far, but it seemed green and pleasant. The other was a rough, stony way leading to a wide valley surrounded by high hills, and overhung by a dull, thick mist, though it was yet early in the summer evening.

"Merrymind was weary with his long journey, and stood thinking of what path to choose, when, by the way of the valley, there came an old man as tall and large as any three men of the north country. His white hair and beard hung like tangled flax about him; his clothes were made of sackcloth; and on his back he carried a heavy burden of dust heaped high in a great pannier.

" 'Listen to me, you lazy vagabond!' he said, coming near to Merrymind: "if you take the way through the wood I know not what will happen to you; but if you choose this path you must help me with my pannier, and I can tell you it's no trifle.'

" 'Well, father,' said Merrymind, 'you seem tired, and I am younger than you, though not quite so tall; so, if you please, I will choose this way, and help you along with the pannier.'

"Scarce had he spoken when the huge man caugh hold of him, firmly bound one side of the pannier t his shoulders with the same strong rope that fastene it on his own back, and never ceased scolding an calling him names as they marched over the ston ground together. It was a rough way and a heav burden, and Merrymind wished himself a thousan times out of the old man's company, but there was n getting off; and at length, in hopes of beguiling th way, and putting him in better humour, he began t sing an old rhyme which his mother had taught him By this time they had entered the valley, and the nigh had fallen very dark and cold. The old man cease scolding, and by a feeble glimmer of the moonlight which now began to shine, Merrymind saw that the were close by a deserted cottage, for its door stoo open to the night winds. Here the old man paused and loosed the rope from his own and Merrymind' shoulders.

"'For seven times seven years,' he said, 'have carried this pannier, and no one ever sang while help ing me before. Night releases all men, so I release you Where will you sleep—by my kitchen fire, or in tha cold cottage?'

"Merrymind thought he had got quite enough of the old man's society, and therefore answered—

" 'The cottage, good father, if you please.'

" 'A sound sleep to you, then!' said the old man, and he went off with his pannier.

"Merrymind stepped into the deserted cottage. The moon was shining through door and window, for the mist was gone, and the night looked clear as day; but in all the valley he could hear no sound, nor was there any trace of inhabitants in the cottage. The hearth looked as if there had not been a fire there for years. A single article of furniture was not to be seen; but Merrymind was sore weary, and, laying himself down in a corner, with his fiddle close by, he fell fast asleep.

"The floor was hard, and his clothes were thin, but all through his sleep there came a sweet sound of singing voices and spinning-wheels, and Merrymind thought he must have been dreaming when he opened his eyes next morning on the bare and solitary house. The beautiful night was gone, and the heavy mist had come back. There was no blue sky, no bright sun to be seen. The light was cold and grey, like that of midwinter; but Merrymind ate the half of his barley cake,

drank from a stream hard by, and went out to see the valley.

"It was full of inhabitants, and they were all busy in houses, in fields, in mills, and in forges. The men hammered and delved; the women scrubbed and scoured; the very children were hard at work: but Merrymind could hear neither talk nor laughter among them. Every face looked careworn and cheerless, and every word was something about work or gain.

"Merrymind thought this unreasonable, for everybody there appeared rich. The women scrubbed in silk, the men delved in scarlet. Crimson curtains, marble floors, and shelves of silver tankards were to be seen in every house; but their owners took neither ease nor pleasure in them, and every one laboured as it were for life.

"The birds of that valley did not sing—they were too busy pecking and building. The cats did not lie by the fire—they were all on the watch for mice. The dogs went out after hares on their own account. The cattle and sheep grazed as if they were never to get another mouthful; and the herdsmen were all splitting wood or making baskets.

"In the midst of the valley there stood a stately

castle, but instead of park and gardens, brew-houses and washing-greens lay round it. The gates stood open, and Merrymind ventured in. The courtyard was full of coopers. They were churning in the banquet hall. They were making cheese on the dais, and spinning and weaving in all its principal chambers. In the highest tower of that busy castle, at a window from which she could see the whole valley, there sat a noble lady. Her dress was rich, but of a dingy drab colour. Her hair was iron-grey; her look was sour and gloomy. Round her sat twelve maidens of the same aspect, spinning on ancient distaffs, and the lady spun as hard as they, but all the yarn they made was jet black.

"No one in or out of the castle would reply to Merrymind's salutations, nor answer him any questions. The rich men pulled out their purses, saying, 'Come and work for wages!' The poor men said, 'We have no time to talk!' A cripple by the wayside wouldn't answer him, he was so busy begging; and a child by a cottage-door said it must go to work. All day Merrymind wandered about with his broken-stringed fiddle, and all day he saw the great old man marching round and round the valley with his heavy burden of dust.

"'It is the dreariest valley that ever I beheld!' he

said to himself. 'And no place to mend my fiddle in; but one would not like to go away without knowing what has come over the people, or if they have always worked so hard and heavily.'

"By this time the night again came on: he knew it by the clearing mist and the rising moon. The people began to hurry home in all directions. Silence came over house and field; and near the deserted cottage Merrymind met the old man.

" 'Good father,' he said, 'I pray you tell me what sport or pastime have the people of this valley?'

" 'Sport and pastime!' cried the old man, in great wrath. 'Where did you hear of the like? We work by day and sleep by night. There is no sport in Dame Dreary's land!' and with a hearty scolding for his idleness and levity, he left Merrymind to sleep once more in the cottage.

"That night the boy did not sleep so sound: though too drowsy to open his eyes, he was sure there had been singing and spinning near him all night; and, resolving to find out what this meant before he left the valley, Merrymind ate the other half of his barley cake, drank again from the stream, and went out to see the country.

"The same heavy mist shut out sun and sky; the

same hard work went forward wherever he turned his eyes; and the great old man with the dust-pannier strode on his accustomed round. Merrymind could find no one to answer a single question; rich and poor wanted him to work still more earnestly than the day before; and fearing that some of them might press him into service, he wandered away to the farthest end of the valley.

"There, there was no work, for the land lay bare and lonely, and was bounded by grey crags, as high and steep as any castle-wall. There was no passage or outlet, but through a great iron gate secured with a heavy padlock: close by it stood a white tent, and in the door a tall soldier, with one arm, stood smoking a long pipe. He was the first idle man Merrymind had seen in the valley, and his face looked to him like that of a friend; so coming up with his best bow, the boy said—

" 'Honourable master soldier, please to tell me what country is this, and why do the people work so hard?'

" 'Are you a stranger in this place, that you ask such questions?' answered the soldier.

" 'Yes,' said Merrymind; 'I came but the evening before yesterday.'

" 'Then I am sorry for you, for here you must remain.

My orders are to let everybody in and nobody out; and the giant with the dust-pannier guards the other entrance night and day,' said the soldier.

"'That is bad news,' said Merrymind; 'but since I am here, please to tell me why were such laws made, and what is the story of this valley?'

"'Hold my pipe, and I will tell you,' said the soldier, 'for nobody else will take the time. This valley belongs to the lady of yonder castle, whom, for seven times seven years, men have called Dame Dreary. She had another name in her youth—they called her Lady Littlecare; and then the valley was the fairest spot in all the north country. The sun shone brightest there; the summers lingered longest. Fairies danced on the hill-tops; singing-birds sat on all the trees. Strongarm, the last of the giants, kept the pine-forest, and hewed yule logs out of it, when he was not sleeping in the sun. Two fair maidens, clothed in white, with silver wheels on their shoulders, came by night, and spun golden threads by the hearth of every cottage. The people wore homespun, and drank out of horn; but they had merry times. There were May-games, harvest-homes and Christmas cheer among them. Shepherds piped on the hill-sides, reapers sang in the

ields, and laughter came with the red firelight out of very house in the evening. All that was changed, nobody knows how, for the old folks who remembered t are dead. Some say it was because of a magic ring which fell from the lady's finger; some because of a pring in the castle-court which went dry. However t was, the lady turned Dame Dreary. Hard work and ard times overspread the valley. The mist came own; the giant Strongarm grew old, and took up a urden of dust; and the night-spinners were seen no nore in any man's dwelling. They say it will be so ill Dame Dreary lays down her distaff, and dances; ut all the fiddlers of the north country have tried heir merriest tunes to no purpose. The king is a wise rince and a great warrior. He has filled two treasure-ouses, and conquered all his enemies; but he cannot hange the order of Dame Dreary's land. I cannot ell you what great rewards he offered to any who ould do it; but when no good came of his offers, the ing feared that similar fashions might spread among is people, and therefore made a law that whomsoever ntered should not leave it. His majesty took me aptive in war, and placed me here to keep the gate, nd save his subjects trouble. If I had not brought

my pipe with me, I should have been working as hard as any of them by this time, with my one arm. Young master, if you take my advice you will learn to smoke.

" 'If my fiddle were mended it would be better,' said Merrymind; and he sat talking with the soldier till the mist began to clear and the moon to rise, and then went home to sleep in the deserted cottage.

"It was late when he came near it, and the moonlight night looked lovely beside the misty day. Merrymind thought it was a good time for trying to get out of the valley. There was no foot abroad, and no appearance of the giant; but as Merrymind drew near to where the two paths met, there was he fast asleep beside a fire of pine-cones, with his pannier at his head and a heap of stones close by him. 'Is that your kitchen-fire?' thought the boy to himself, and he tried to steal past; but Strongarm started up, and pursued him with stones, calling him bad names, half way back to the cottage.

"Merrymind was glad to run the whole way for fear of him. The door was still open, and the moon was shining in; but by the fireless hearth there sat two fair maidens, all in white, spinning on silver wheels, and singing together a blithe and pleasant tune like the

arks on May-morning. Merrymind could have lis-ened all night, but suddenly he bethought him that hese must be the night-spinners, whose threads would nend his fiddle; so, stepping with reverence and good ourage, he said—

" 'Honourable ladies, I pray you give a poor boy a hread to mend his fiddle-strings.'

" 'For seven times seven years,' said the fair maid-ns, 'have we spun by night in this deserted cottage, nd no mortal has seen or spoken to us. Go and gather ticks through all the valley to make a fire for us on his cold hearth, and each of us will give you a thread or your pains.'

"Merrymind took his broken fiddle with him, and vent through all the valley gathering sticks by the noonlight; but so careful were the people of Dame Dreary's land, that scarce a stick could be found, and he moon was gone, and the misty day had come before e was able to come back with a small fagot. The ottage-door was still open; the fair maidens and their ilver wheels were gone; but on the floor where they at lay two long threads of gold.

"Merrymind first heaped up his fagot on the hearth, o be ready against their coming at night, and next

took up the golden threads to mend his fiddle. Then he learned the truth of the little man's saying at the fair, for no sooner were the strings fastened with those golden threads than they became firm. The old dingy fiddle too began to shine and glisten, and at length it was golden also. This sight made Merrymind so joyful, that, unlearned as he was in music, the boy tried to play. Scarce had his bow touched the strings when they began to play of themselves the same blithe and pleasant tune which the night-spinners sang together.

" 'Some of the workers will stop for the sake of this tune,' said Merrymind, and he went out along the valley with his fiddle. The music filled the air; the busy people heard it; and never was such a day seen in Dame Dreary's land. The men paused in their delving; the women stopped their scrubbing; the little children dropped their work; and every one stood still in their places while Merrymind and his fiddle passed on. When he came to the castle, the coopers cast down their tools in the court; the churning and cheesemaking ceased in the banquet hall; the looms and spinning wheels stopped in the principal chambers; and Dame Dreary's distaff stood still in her hand.

"Merrymind played through the halls and up the

ower-stairs. As he came near, the dame cast down ıer distaff, and danced with all her might. All her naidens did the like; and as they danced she grew ⁄oung again—the sourness passed from her looks, and he greyness from her hair. They brought her the lress of white and cherry-colour she used to wear in ıer youth, and she was no longer Dame Dreary, but he Lady Littlecare, with golden hair, and laughing ⁄es, and cheeks like summer roses.

"Then a sound of merrymaking came up from the vhole valley. The heavy mist rolled away over the ills; the sun shone out; the blue sky was seen; a clear pring gushed up in the castle-court; a white falcon ame from the east with a golden ring, and put it on he lady's finger. After that Strongarm broke the rope, ossed the pannier of dust from his shoulder, and lay lown to sleep in the sun. That night the fairies danced n the hill-tops; and the night-spinners, with their ilver wheels, were seen by every hearth, and no more n the deserted cottage. Everybody praised Merry-nind and his fiddle; and when news of his wonderful laying came to the king's ears, he commanded the ron gate to be taken away; he made the captive sol-lier a free man; and promoted Merrymind to be his

first fiddler, which under that wise monarch was the highest post in his kingdom.

"As soon as Merrymind's family and neighbours heard of the high preferment his fiddle had gained for him, they thought music must be a good thing, and man, woman, and child took to fiddling. It is said that none of them ever learned to play a single tune except Merrymind's mother, on whom her son bestowed great presents."

Here the voice ceased, and one clothed in green and russet-coloured velvet rose up with a golden fiddle in his hand, and said—

"That's my story."

"Excepting yesterday's tale, and the five that went before it," said King Winwealth, "I have not heard such a story as that since my brother Wisewit went from me, and was lost in the forest. Fairfortune, the first of my pages, go and bring this maiden a golden girdle. And since her grandmother's chair can tell such stories, she shall go no more into low company but feast with us in our chief banquet hall, and sleep in one of the best chambers of the palace!"

CHAPTER IX

PRINCE WISEWIT'S RETURN

SNOWFLOWER was delighted at the promise of feasting with those noble lords and ladies, whose wonderful stories she had heard from the chair. er courtesy was twice as low as usual, and she anked King Winwealth from the bottom of her art. All the company were glad to make room for r, and when her golden girdle was put on, little owflower looked as fine as the best of them.

"Mamma," whispered the Princess Greedalind, ile she looked ready to cry for spite, "only see that

low little girl who came here in a coarse frock an barefooted, what finery and favour she has gained b her story-telling chair! All the court are praising he and overlooking me, though the feast was made i honour of my birthday. Mamma, I must have tha chair from her. What business has a common littl girl with anything so amusing?"

"So you shall, my daughter," said Queen Wantall— for by this time she saw that King Winwealth ha according to custom, fallen asleep on his throne. S calling two of her pages, Screw and Hardhands, sh ordered them to bring the chair from the other end o the hall where Snowflower sat, and directly made it present to Princess Greedalind.

Nobody in that court ever thought of disputin Queen Wantall's commands, and poor Snowflower sa down to cry in a corner; while Princess Greedalin putting on what she thought a very grand air, lai down her head on the cushion, saying—

"Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story."

"Where did you get a grandmother?" cried the cle voice from under the cushion; and up went the cha with such force as to throw Princess Greedalind off o

he floor, where she lay screaming, a good deal more ngry than hurt.

All the courtiers tried in vain to comfort her. But Queen Wantall, whose temper was still worse, vowed hat she would punish the impudent thing, and sent or Sturdy, her chief woodman, to chop it up with is axe.

At the first stroke the cushion was cut open, and, o the astonishment of everybody, a bird, whose snow-vhite feathers were tipped with purple, darted out and lew away through an open window.

"Catch it! catch it!" cried the queen and the rincess; and all but King Winwealth, who still slept n his throne, rushed out after the bird. It flew over he palace garden and into a wild common, where ouses had been before Queen Wantall pulled them lown to search for a gold mine, which her majesty ever found, though three deep pits were dug to come t it. To make the place look smart at the feast time hese pits had been covered over with loose boughs and urf. All the rest of the company remembered this but Queen Wantall and Princess Greedalind. They were earest to the bird, and poor Snowflower, by running ard, came close behind them, but Fairfortune, the

king's first page, drew her back by the purple mantle when, coming to the covered pit, boughs and turf gave way, and down went the queen and the princess.

Everybody looked for the bird, but it was nowhere to be seen; but on the common where they saw it alight, there stood a fair and royal prince, clad in robe of purple and a crown of changing colours, for sometimes it seemed of gold and sometimes of forest leaves.

Most of the courtiers stood not knowing what to think, but all the fairy people and all the lords and ladies of the chair's stories, knew him, and cried "Welcome to Prince Wisewit!"

King Winwealth heard that sound where he slept and came out glad of heart to welcome back his brother. When the lord high chamberlain and his own pages came out with ropes and lanthorns to search for Queen Wantall and Princess Greedalind they found them safe and well at the bottom of the pit, having fallen on a heap of loose sand. The pit was of great depth, but some daylight shone down, and whatever were the yellow grains they saw glittering among the sand, the queen and the princess believed it was full of gold.

IT FLEW OVER THE PALACE GARDEN.

They called the miners false knaves, lazy rogues, id a score of bad names beside, for leaving so much ealth behind them, and utterly refused to come out the pit; saying, that since Prince Wisewit was come, ey could find no pleasure in the palace, but would ay there and dig for gold, and buy the world with for themselves. King Winwealth thought the plan as a good one for keeping peace in his palace. He ommanded shovels and picks to be lowered to the ueen and the princess. The two pages, Screw and ardhands, went down to help them, in hopes of alving the profits, and there they stayed, digging for old. Some of the courtiers said they would find it; hers believed they never could; and the gold was not und when this story was written.

As for Prince Wisewit, he went home with the rest the company, leading Snowflower by the hand, and lling them all how he had been turned into a bird the cunning fairy Fortunetta, who found him off s guard in the forest; how she had shut him up under e cushion of that curious chair, and given it to old ame Frostyface; and how all his comfort had been little Snowflower, to whom he told so many stories. King Winwealth was so rejoiced to find his brother

again, that he commanded another feast to be held fo seven days. All that time the gates of the palace stoo open; all comers were welcome, all complaints heard The houses and lands which Queen Wantall had take away were restored to their rightful owners. Every body got what they most wanted. There were no mor clamours without, nor discontents within the palace and on the seventh day of the feast who should arriv but Dame Frostyface, in her grey hood and mantle.

Snowflower was right glad to see her grandmother— so were the king and prince, for they had known th dame in her youth. They kept the feast for seve days more; and when it was ended everything wa right in the kingdom. King Winwealth and Princ Wisewit reigned once more together; and becaus Snowflower was the best girl in all that country, the chose her to be their heiress, instead of Princes Greedalind. From that day forward she wore whit velvet and satin; she had seven pages, and lived i the grandest part of the palace. Dame Frostyface, too was made a great lady. They put a new velvet cushio on her chair, and she sat in a gown of grey cloth, edge with gold, spinning on an ivory wheel in a fine painte parlour. Prince Wisewit built a great summer-hous

overed with vines and roses, on the spot where her ld cottage stood. He also made a highway through he forest, that all good people might come and go here at their leisure; and the cunning fairy Fortu-letta, finding that her reign was over in those parts, et off on a journey round the world, and did not return n the time of this story. Good boys and girls, who nay chance to read it, that time is long ago. Great vars, work, and learning have passed over the world ince then, and altered all its fashions. Kings make o seven-day feasts for all comers now. Queens and rincesses, however greedy, do not mine for gold. Chairs tell no tales. Wells work no wonders; and here are no such doings on hills and forests, for the airies dance no more. Some say it was the hum of chools—some think it was the din of factories that rightened them; but nobody has been known to have een them for many a year, except, it is said, one Hans Christian Andersen, in Denmark, whose tales of the airies are so good that they must have been heard rom themselves.

It is certain that no living man knows the subse-uent history of King Winwealth's country, nor what ecame of all the notable characters who lived and

visited at his palace. Yet there are people who believ that the monarch still falls asleep on his throne, an into low spirits after supper; that Queen Wantall an Princess Greedalind have found the gold, and begu to buy; that Dame Frostyface yet spins—they canno tell where; that Snowflower may still be seen at th new year's time in her dress of white velvet, lookin out for the early spring; that Prince Wisewit ha somehow fallen under a stronger spell and a thicke cushion, that he still tells stories to Snowflower an her friends, and when both cushion and spell ar broken by another stroke of Sturdy's hatchet—whic they expect will happen some time—the prince wi make all things right again, and bring back the fair times to the world.

J
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Browne, Frances
Granny's wonderful chair.

July 25, 1996

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